



Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council

Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2040

**Made Version
15 July 2025**



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APPENDIX A: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

0 ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE PARISH COUNCIL AND ADDRESSED IN THIS PLAN

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the key issues that face the community of Ixworth Parish. In summary these are:

- To ensure that new housing meets the needs of those with a connection to Ixworth that are in housing need.
- To ensure that the infrastructure of Ixworth Village is protected, improved and expanded so that it can address the cumulative impacts of the growth in population that will arise through new development. In particular, this relates to the need for expanded community and retail facilities.
- The growing volume of traffic and parking in the Village centre, with its relatively narrow High Street remains a concern.
- The limited amount of access to recreational and green space provision in Ixworth Village and the poor access to leisure routes outside the Village.
- The event of the Covid-19 pandemic has seen at least two businesses close and there is a need, therefore, to encourage businesses and outlets.
- If Ixworth Village centre is to remain vibrant and continue to be a place where people come to shop and spend their leisure time, more businesses need to be encouraged.

1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Plan

- 1.1 This is the Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe for the period 2023 to 2040. The document sets out a series of planning policies which represent the wishes of our residents regarding the future development of the Parish.
- 1.2 The Plan seeks to guide those wishing to submit planning applications for development within the Parish. There are also topics listed within a non-policy section which reflect the desires of local residents for their locality but which are not directly achievable by planning policy alone.
- 1.3 The idea of the Neighbourhood Plan giving local people greater influence over the planning matters that may impact their communities was introduced by the Government's Localism Act in 2012. Ultimately such plans are required to be developed in conformity with national planning policy, provided by the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Certain 'strategic' matters such as the number of new properties required to be built within any given parish are developed through district 'local plans'.
- 1.4 Within this process a neighbourhood plan must comply with the regulations set at national level. However, once a plan is in place then it holds as much weight as a local plan in determining planning applications in the area.

The consultation process

- 1.5 The contents of this document have arisen entirely from the wishes of the people of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe. Public consultation began in November 2018 with a parish-wide questionnaire aimed at establishing the general areas of concern and interest. Specific topics were refined at a series of 'drop-in' events at Ixworth Village Hall in March 2019 where residents could suggest new issues or express the level of their support for existing ones. Finally, workshop events were run for a limited number of residents to pin down the detail of key areas. The results of these workshops were presented to the public at the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2019.

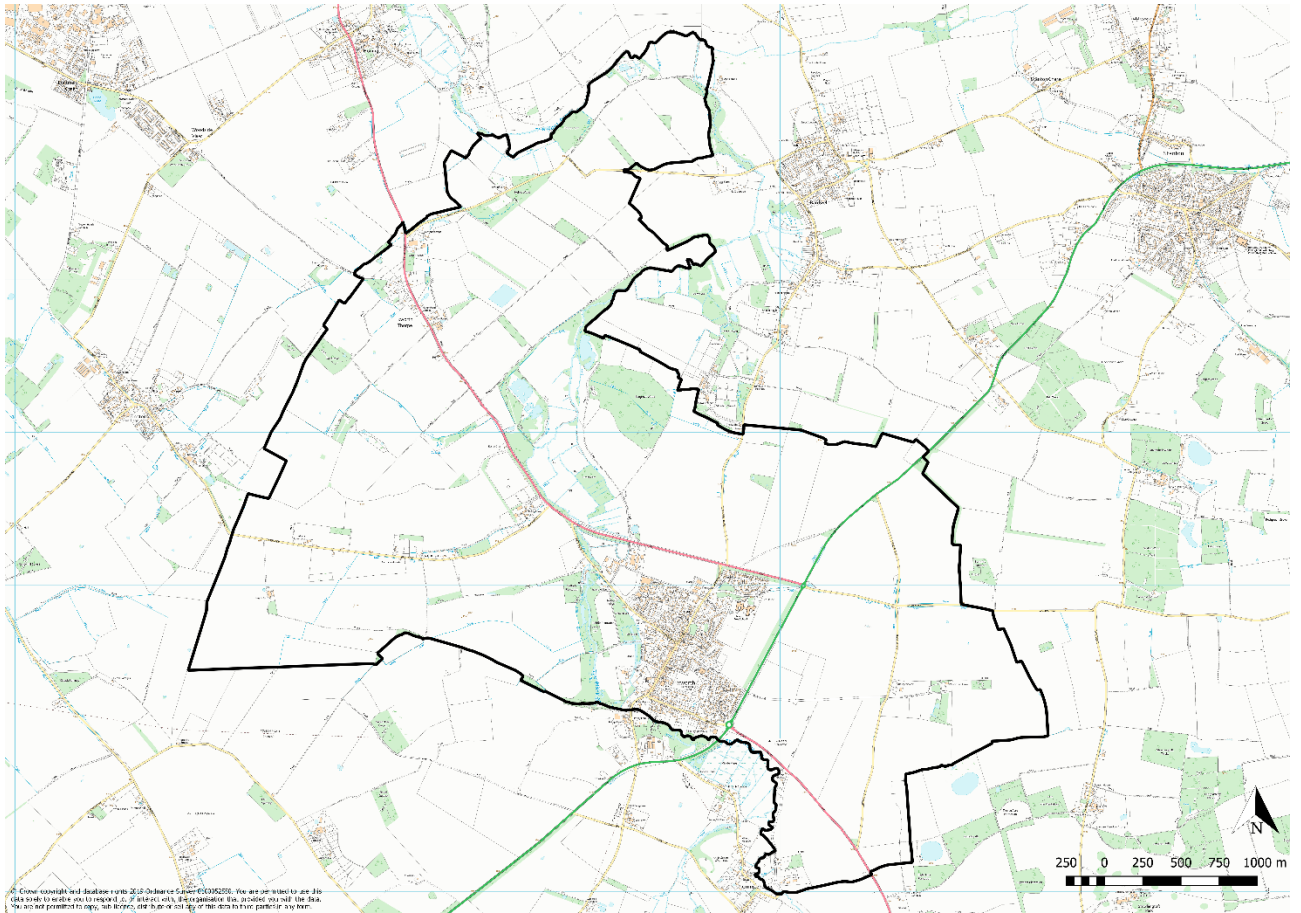


Activity at the Workshop events, March 2019 (C Bowden)

- 1.6 Specific consultations were held with the pupils of both of Ixworth's schools in order that the opinions of a whole age-group should not be lost. Opinion as to the future of Ixworth's Village Hall and its sporting facilities was supplemented by the results of a consultation undertaken by the Jiggins Charity in 2017.
- 1.7 An important matter raised by the community was housing need. A full Local Housing Needs Survey was conducted in June 2019 under the auspices of Community Action Suffolk. The survey was preceded by a mailing to all residents from the Rt Hon Matthew Hancock MP.
- 1.8 Throughout the process the public were kept informed of our progress via the Parish Council website and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group's social media channels. There were a further two public engagement events between the establishment of the policy structure and the final completion of the Plan document.
- 1.9 Since this time, the Parish Council has undertaken the Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) public consultation and the representations received have informed this version of the Plan.

Planning context

- 1.10 This Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended in 2015). The Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has prepared the Plan to establish a vision for the future of the Parish and to set out how that vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the Plan period.
- 1.11 Map 1 shows the boundary of the Parish of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe and, therefore, the area of interest of this document. Following the required public consultation this area was designated for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan by the former St Edmundsbury Borough Council on 20 July 2017.
- 1.12 In 2019, West Suffolk Council was formed from the two former council areas of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. In the Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe neighbourhood area, the local plan for West Suffolk Council is made up of the Core Strategy (2010), Rural Vision 2031 (adopted in 2014) and Joint Development Management Policies document (2015). In addition, the development plan includes the adopted Suffolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2020). Any developments brought forward within the minerals consultation zone will need to consider their impact on this safeguarded waste transfer site (WTF32c – Green Lane, Honington, Bury St Edmunds).
- 1.13 West Suffolk Council is currently engaged in a complete review of the West Suffolk Local Plan. The target date for adoption of the revised plan – which will supersede the Core Strategy, Rural Vision and Joint Development Management Policies - is Spring 2025. Accordingly, the Regulation 19 consultation version of the Local Plan has informed the Neighbourhood Plan.



Map 1: Boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan Area

Monitoring and review of the plan

- 1.14 Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council is the body responsible for the creation and monitoring of the Plan. They will monitor the delivery of the policies as stated and will periodically review its contents to ensure that it remains relevant in the future. At an appropriate time (most likely within the first 5 years), the Parish Council may wish to undertake a review of the Plan. The adoption of the West Suffolk Local Plan is likely to take place early in the life of any made neighbourhood plan. As such the Parish Council will consider the need or otherwise for a review of the Plan within six months of the adoption of the Local Plan.

2 LOCAL CONTEXT

History of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe

- 2.1 Ixworth's origins lie in the Roman period. Around AD 61, following Boudicca's rebellion, the Roman road known as Peddar's Way was pushed through the heavily-wooded landscape of 'High Suffolk.' Where it crossed the river Black Bourn at Ixworth a fort was built. Although the fort had gone out of use by the end of the First Century, a settlement persisted at its location, based on the pottery trade. A villa was also established 800 metres to the east. However, one researcher (see David Ratledge and the Antonine Itineraries) has suggested that Ixworth is the previously lost Roman settlement of Sitomagus. Settlement continued through the Saxon era and the Village gained its name 'Gyxeweorde' or Gicsa's Place.
- 2.2 Ixworth Thorpe's name suggests that it was established under the Danelaw during the Saxon period as a hamlet or secondary settlement to Ixworth. Ixworth Village and Ixworth Thorpe hamlet today differ enormously in size; however, in 1086 the Domesday Book records Ixworth Village as having 51 households while Thorpe (as it was named) had 31.
- 2.3 Robert le Blund was granted the manors of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe by William the Conqueror and it was his family that established an Augustine Priory at Ixworth in the Twelfth Century. Suddenly there was an institution that required the support of artisans and traders and which would manage the running of the estate lands. The Roman road came into its own too as a medieval trading and droving route, further supporting growth. Ixworth Village's wider local significance started in 1384 when Richard II granted the Village a market and two annual fairs. Without the benefits of the Priory and the road, Ixworth Thorpe hamlet did not develop although it retained its own identity and had its own parish boundary up until it combined with Ixworth Village in 1966.



Ixworth High Street circa 1910
(Farrington series postcard)

- 2.4 The establishment of the Turnpike through Ixworth Village in 1769 gave a further boost; now there was a need for a coaching inn and a place to change horses. That inn became an administrative centre for the surrounding parishes including as host for the Magistrates'

Court; ultimately a proper court building was constructed nearby. For the next two centuries Ixworth Village was known for its long, straight High Street with nearly every building hosting a commercial enterprise of some kind. This was a home to tanning, malting, cart building, linen production and, ultimately, a cider factory. There was some spread of the settlement over time including the building of the first council houses ever to be commissioned by a British rural authority in 1893. More council building was to follow before a flowering of private housing estates from the 1960s to the 1980s. The major restriction was the famous High Street with its two junctions directing traffic to all points of the compass in ever-increasing quantity. Modern traffic, particularly heavy lorries either articulated or laden with sugar beet, was struggling to make progress and causing structural damage and so a long-held desire to bypass the Village was finally realised in 1986.

The settlements today

- 2.5 As at the 2011 Census the population of Ixworth Village was 2,255. It was declared a Key Service Centre in the Rural Vision 2031 document adopted by the former St Edmundsbury Borough Council in September 2014. This identified Ixworth Village as having a good range of services and facilities making it suitable for a certain level of additional growth. Housing development has continued to expand towards the new geographical boundary of the bypass and further housing is already at the planning stage. At the same time the commercial life of Ixworth Village has declined somewhat with, a café and the Post Office closing. However, there remain a general store, two public houses serving food, Chinese take away, fish and chip shop, dressmaker and upholsterer, two hairdressers, women's boutique, beauty parlour, two vehicle repair shops with servicing facilities, funeral Parlour, two churches and a chapel. A new community café opened in 2019 at the Pykkrell and more recently the old café was reopened as a play facility with a café inside.
- 2.6 Recently two new businesses have located into Ixworth Thorpe. 'Appetite Me' is a company specialising in rural retail and hospitality development. MKM is a lawn and garden machinery specialist.



Ixworth 1882
(National Library of Scotland)

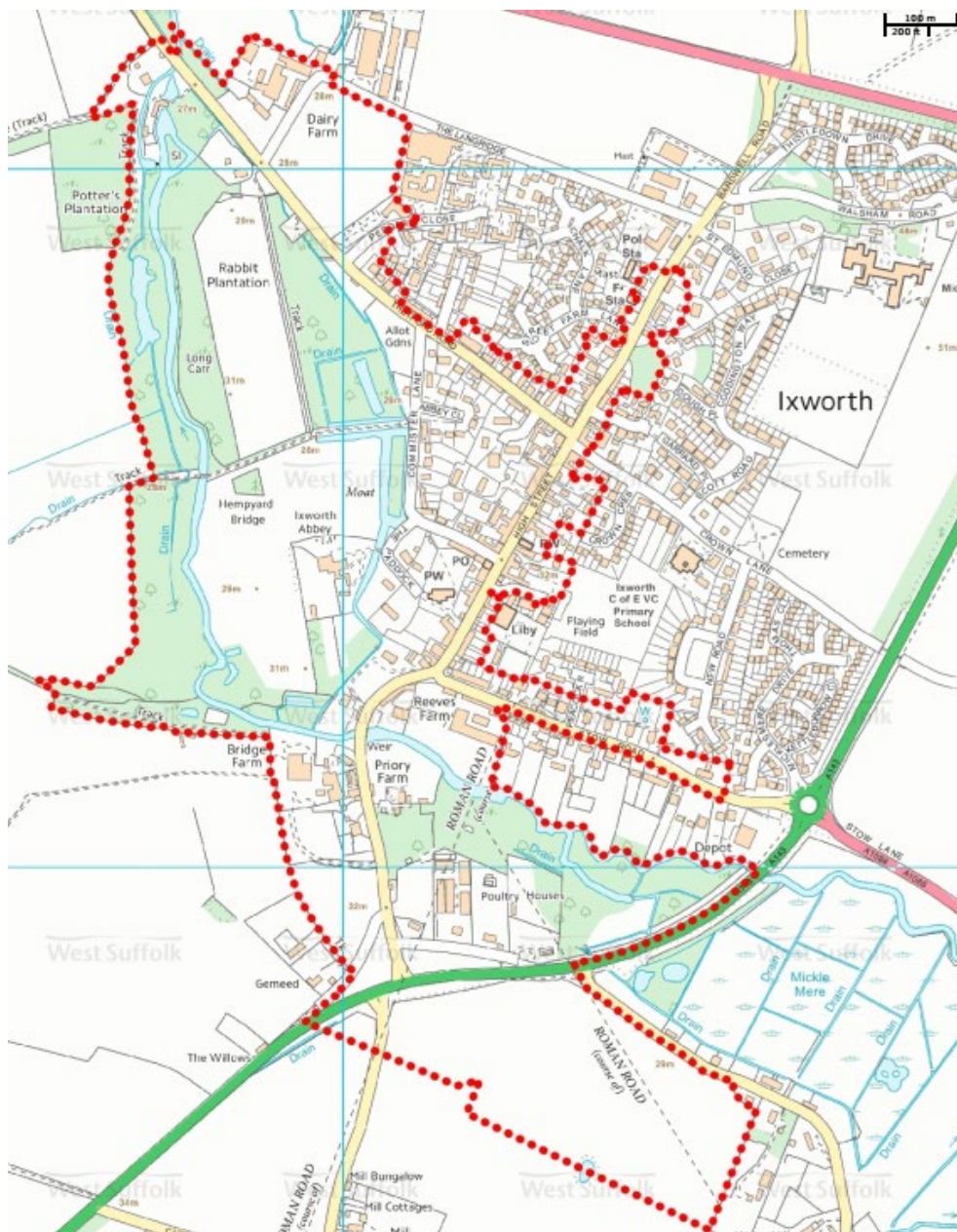


Ixworth 2019
(OS mapping)

- 2.7 The population of Ixworth Thorpe hamlet stood at 67 in 2011; with the exception of the once-a-week bus service, all of its services have been lost with the Royal Oak public house being the last to go in 2008. This is reflective of Ixworth Thorpe's role as a hamlet supporting

agriculture with manpower giving way to ever more sophisticated machinery and modern farming techniques. For centuries it has been a home to two large farms. Those farms were combined into one business when the Ixworth Thorpe Estate was sold in 1962.

- 2.8 A significant proportion of Ixworth Village is designated as a Conservation Area (see Map 2). The 2010 Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (prepared by the former St Edmundsbury Borough Council) notes that there are a variety of different ages and uses of buildings in the Conservation Area, with no one style being typical. It also notes the importance of the natural environment, with mature trees giving an attractive backdrop to many street views and playing an important role in giving the area its special character and appearance.



Map 2: Ixworth Conservation Area

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Profile of Ixworth Parish

Population

- 2.9 In 2021 the population of Ixworth Parish was 2,304. The age distribution generally reflected that of West Suffolk and Suffolk County, although a general trend showed that the parish had a higher proportion of older people (aged 50+) (Figure 1).

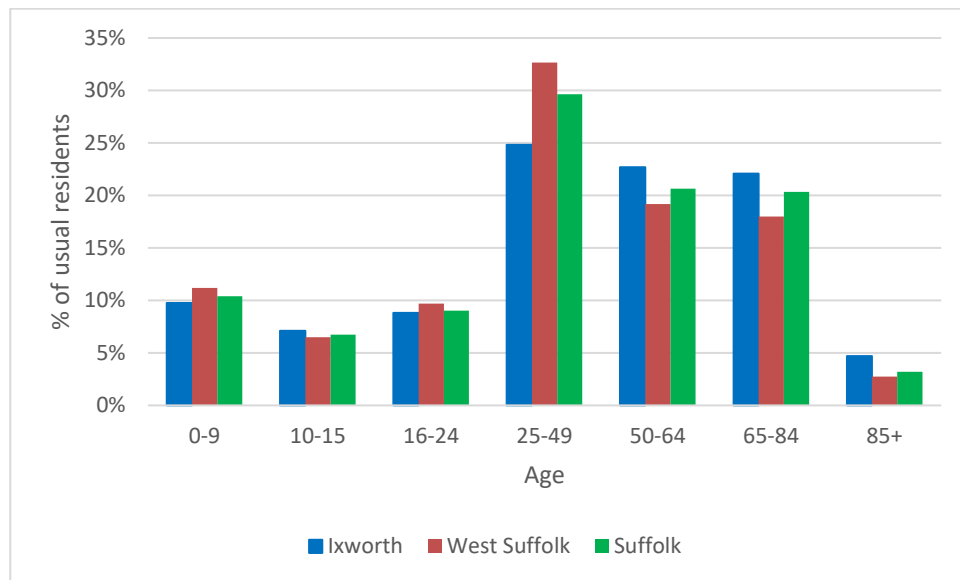


Figure 1: Population, 2021 (Census 2021)

- 2.10 Since 2011, the population of Ixworth Parish fell by 2.6% (or 61 persons). By contrast, growth was higher in West Suffolk at 13% and Suffolk County at 9%. Figure 2 shows that, between 2011 and 2021, Ixworth saw all age bands up to the age of 49 increase in population, whereas there was a significant decline in the number of over-50s. This suggests that new development has helped to increase the number of younger people in Ixworth although the decline in the numbers of older people suggests a need for more housing to suit older 'downsizers'.

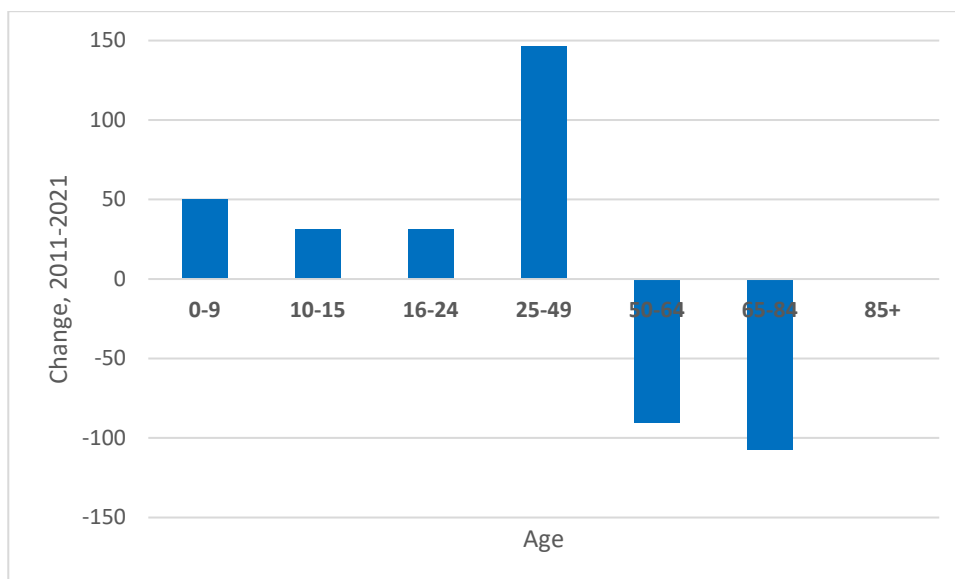


Figure 2: Change in population in Ixworth, 2011-2021 (Census 2011 and 2021)

Type of dwelling

- 2.11 The housing stock of Ixworth Parish primarily comprises detached properties (59%) followed by semi-detached properties (21%) and terraced properties (14%). The proportion of flats and converted or shared houses is very low. This is shown in Figure 3.

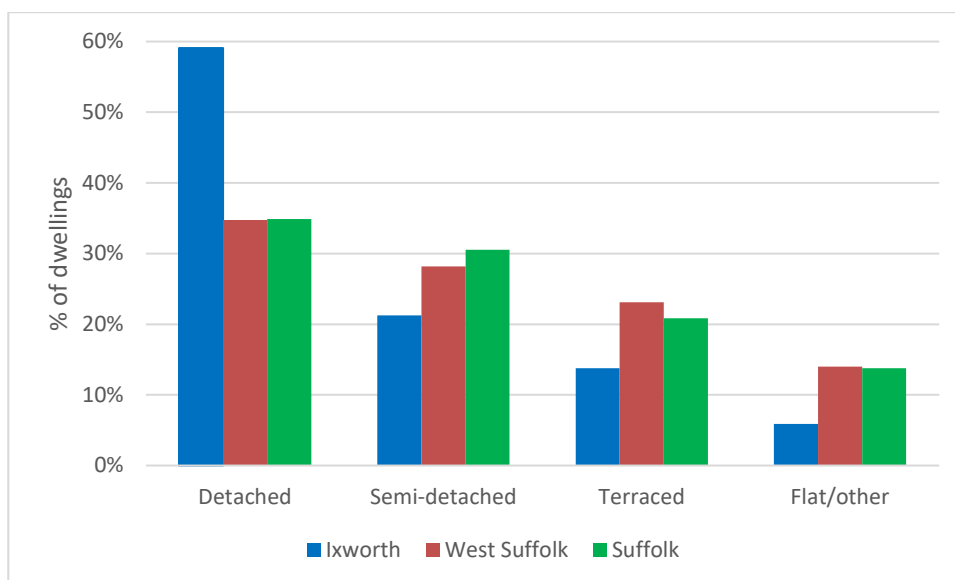


Figure 3: Type of dwelling, 2021 (Census 2021)

Occupancy rating

- 2.12 The occupancy ratings show a broad trend among all levels, but Ixworth Parish (54%) has a noticeably higher occupancy rating of +2 or more (meaning a household has two more bedrooms than is recommended for the number and composition of people living in the household) and a lower occupancy rating of 0 when compared to the district and county

levels, reflecting the prominence of large, detached homes in the area coupled with the high proportion of retirees. This suggests that a greater proportion of smaller housing would better meet the needs of the community. This is shown in Figure 4.

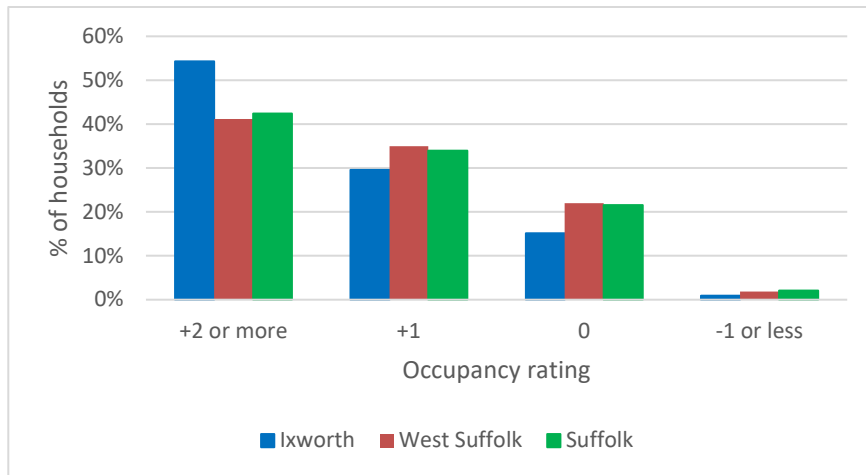


Figure 4: Occupancy rating, 2021 (Census 2021)

- 2.13 The median house price in September 2023 for the IP31 postcode (which includes Ixworth Parish but excludes Bury St Edmunds) was £377,500 (source: home.co.uk). This represents a price:earnings ratio of 14.18, well above the national ratio of 12.82. In other words, the average property in Ixworth is more than 14 times the average earnings of a local household. This demonstrates that affordability is a significant issue in Ixworth.

Economic activity

- 2.14 The population of residents aged 16 or over in Ixworth Parish shows a lower proportion of people in full-time employment when compared to West Suffolk and Suffolk County as a whole. Ixworth also has higher levels of retirees. This is shown in Figure 5.

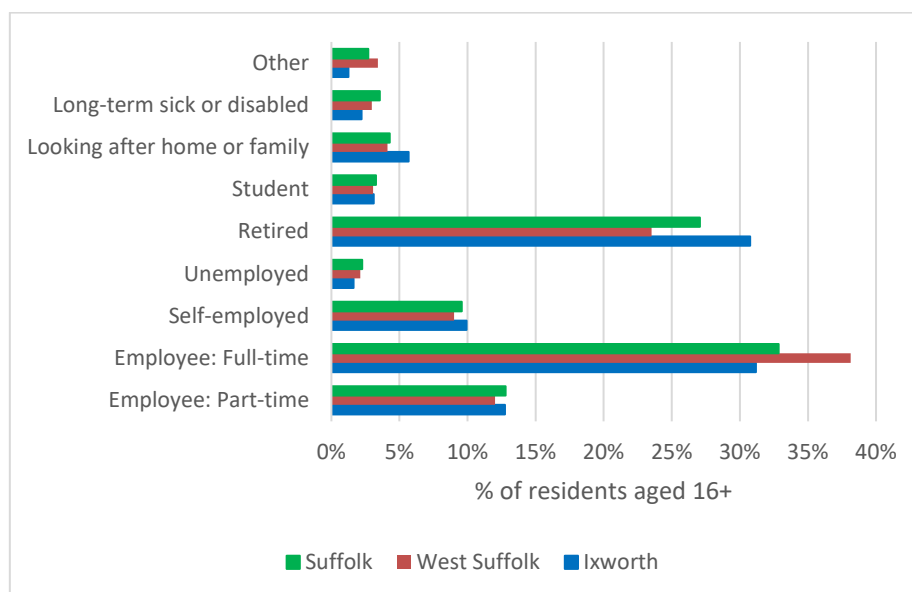


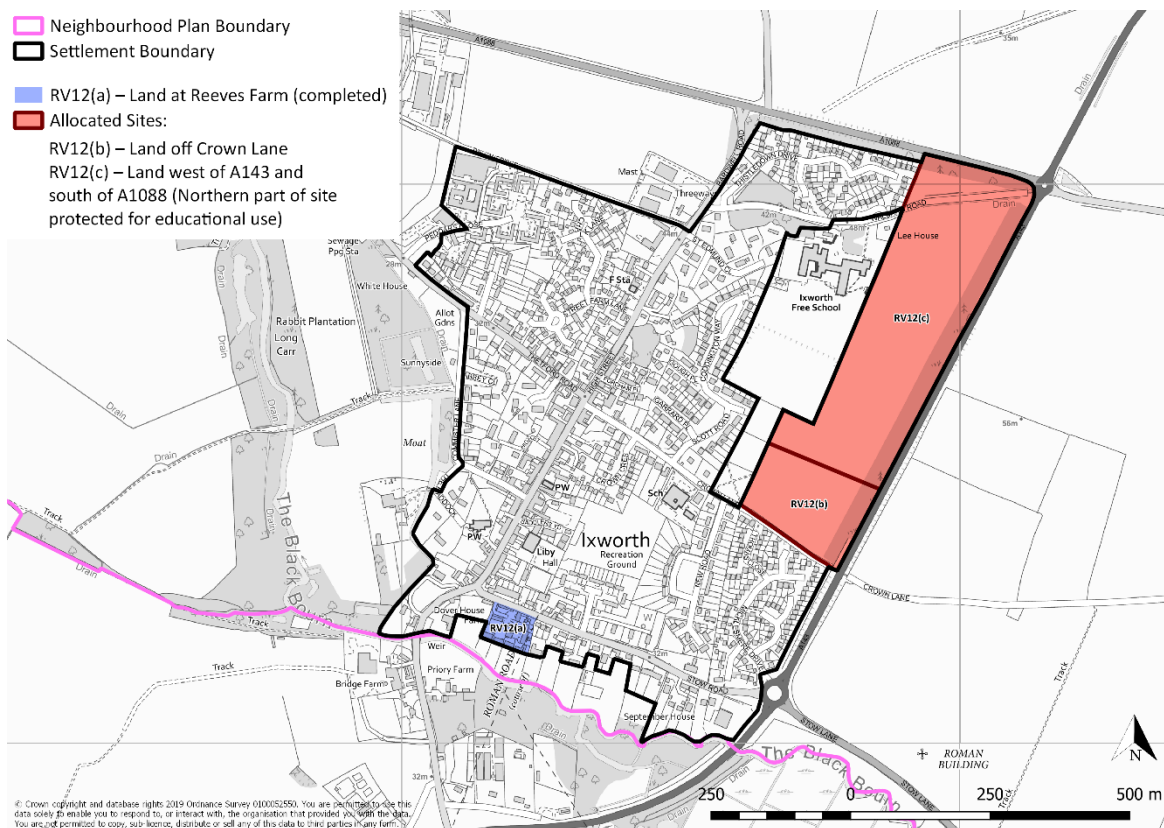
Figure 5: Economic activity, 2021 (Census 2021)

Development in the planning pipeline

2.15 The former St Edmundsbury area Rural Vision 2031 allocated three sites for development in Ixworth Village:

- Land at Reeves Farm (allocated for 20 dwellings) has been developed for 16 dwellings.
- Land off Crown Lane (allocated for 90 a minimum of dwellings).
- Land west of A143 and south of A1088 (allocated for a minimum of 80 dwellings plus land reserved for educational use, relating to a new primary school).

2.16 This is shown on Map 3.



Map 3: Site allocations in former St Edmundsbury area Rural Vision 2031

2.17 It should be noted that the Regulation 19 Consultation Version of the West Suffolk Emerging Local Plan proposes to amalgamate the two sites RV12(b) and RV12(c) into a single site which should deliver a minimum of 145 dwellings and land to accommodate a primary school and early years setting.

Local infrastructure

Transport and movement

- 2.18 Following the building of the bypass at Ixworth Village there was a noticeable increase in road traffic along the A143 between Diss and Bury St Edmunds; this was ascribed to a willingness of people working in Bury St Edmunds and Cambridge to commute from further north once the problems of the congested High Street had been eliminated. **Residents are concerned that further development at Ixworth, combined with that at Stanton, will significantly worsen the existing highway situation. There are also concerns about the use of 'ghost' junctions being used to access the Village from the bypass. These junctions are not easily visible, particularly at night, and several accidents have been recorded.** Access to the developments shown on Map 3 has been a cause for dispute between the developer and local authorities and there has been a long delay to development as a result.
- 2.19 Within Ixworth Village the High Street remains a major source of concern to residents. Speeding is frequently observed, parking restrictions often ignored and sight-lines for pedestrians are poor. The entrance to Crown Lane is very narrow and, due to the position of historic buildings, is incapable of remedy. The pedestrian safety aspect of this junction, particularly for primary school pupils, has been recognised by the installation of a safe-walking route through Fordham Place supported by a zebra crossing in the High Street.



High Street traffic



Ghost junction on Bypass

- 2.20 Ixworth Village is less well served with buses than it was earlier and the level of service continues to deteriorate. The main service runs between Diss and Bury St Edmunds, passing through the Village approximately eight times per day in each direction from Monday to Friday, less frequently on Saturdays. There are no evening or night buses and no service on Sundays and Bank Holidays. School buses operate into Ixworth from neighbouring Villages in support of SET Ixworth School and out of Ixworth to Thurston Community College. Additionally, SET Ixworth School operates a minibus service for pupils from Stowmarket and Thetford.
- 2.21 Ixworth Thorpe hamlet has a single bus service which runs to and from Bury St Edmunds once on a Wednesday to allow people to visit the street market. The timing allows passengers just over five hours in Bury St Edmunds.

- 2.22 There is no safe link between Ixworth Village and Ixworth Thorpe hamlet for cyclists and pedestrians and the presence of the river and the bypass make residents of Ixworth feel that they are cut off from easy access to the surrounding countryside. A distinct shortage of rights of way in the Parish is much regretted.

Village facilities

- 2.23 As befits its status as a Key Service Centre, Ixworth Village plays host to a range of public facilities unusual for a village of its size. There are worries locally about the ability of these facilities to cope with the expansion of the village. The GP surgery is of particular concern as it serves several settlements which exceed Ixworth in size, both of which are growing rapidly.

Emergency services

- 2.24 Ixworth Fire Station is of 1970s design but since extended to house a water-tender Fire Appliance and a Command Support Unit. Both vehicles are operated by on-call crews as part of the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service. The Station's training room is occasionally available to the local community for small-scale meetings.
- 2.25 Ixworth Village's stand-alone Police Station was demolished in 2013 and replaced with an annex to the Fire Station. This is an unstaffed station which no longer operates a desk for public contact. There is an emergency contact telephone affixed to the outer wall of the building.



Ixworth Fire Station



Ixworth Police Station

Education

- 2.26 Ixworth Church of England Primary School has occupied its current site in Crown Lane since 1969; it has an associated nursery facility. It has been renovated several times over the years and, along the way, lost its swimming pool. It can accommodate 236 pupils from ages 3 to 11 (which includes nursery provision). The need for a larger primary school has already been recognised and this will be provided for in the development adjacent to the existing school site.
- 2.27 As at 2020-21, numbers of pupils on the school roll had fallen since the school was made an Academy. In 2022, the most recent Ofsted inspection graded the school as 'good' which was a double improvement from the previous grading of 'inadequate'. Further growth in Ixworth Parish, as proposed through the site allocations in the adopted St Edmundsbury area Rural Vision and emerging West Suffolk Local Plan, mean that there is sufficient demand to justify delivery of new primary school provision in Ixworth.



Ixworth Primary School



SET Ixworth School

- 2.28 SET Ixworth School is housed in the former Ixworth Middle School building in Walsham Road. The site was taken on by the Seckford Education Trust in 2014 as Ixworth Free School. The school can take up to 500 pupils from ages 11-16. The school together with the Jiggins Trust achieved a successful grant from the Garfield Western Trust for the newly-built Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). The school has hosted events such as the Annual Parish Meeting.
- 2.29 As of September 2023 the school was oversubscribed at Year 7 entry stage.



The MUGA and Tennis Courts



SET School Playing Fields

Health

- 2.30 Ixworth Surgery was built in 1971 and extended to its current size in stages between 1985 and 2011. It incorporates a pharmacy and a range of treatment rooms. The Practice offers specialist respiratory care, a dietician, physiotherapy, an orthoptic clinic, counselling services and carers' sessions. The Pharmacy has gained in importance in recent years and has undergone a physical expansion and a great improvement in technological support. It is not possible to extend the surgery building further on its current site.
- 2.31 There are over 9,000 people registered with the Practice under the care of two full-time and four part-time GPs and a six-strong nursing team. Patients are drawn from 28 villages within a radius of seven miles of Ixworth Village. Two of these villages are a cause for concern for the future of the Surgery: approximately 13% of the population of Thurston and 30% of the population of Stanton are registered with the Practice. In the last ten years around 1,800

dwellings have been either built or planned for at Thurston; in the case of Stanton the figure is 750. With poor public transport, travel to the surgery is a concern for frail patients.



Ixworth Surgery



The Beeches

Care for the elderly

- 2.32 The Beeches is a privately-run residential care home in the High Street, occupying what was formerly a large private house and the neighbouring property of Fyfield House. First opened as a home for the elderly in 1985 it now specialises in dementia care. It can accommodate 43 residents and has undergone recent extension and improvement work.
- 2.33 Ixworth Court was first opened in 1975 as a council-run care home for the elderly and later closed when the Council moved to 60-bed units. It was re-opened in 2018, after an extensive refurbishment, and was operated as a specialist care home. However, in October 2023 it was closed by the Care Quality Commission.



Blackbourne View (Orwell Housing)

- 2.34 Blackbourne View is an extra-care housing scheme for the elderly. The building is run by Housing 21 with the care provided by Orwell Housing Association. Opened in 2005 it consists of 33 self-contained one- and two-bedroomed apartments on two floors.

Community facilities

- 2.35 Ixworth Village Hall is known as the Jiggins Memorial Hall and was opened in 1931 following a generous bequest from the estate of local farmer Charles Jiggins. It has undergone repeated extension and development over the years in an effort to improve its range of facilities. It is operated by the Jiggins Memorial Hall and Playing Fields Charity, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The Charity has considered the possibility of extensively

redeveloping the hall or creating an entirely new community centre on an alternative site yet to be determined. Considerations are still ongoing.



Jiggins Memorial Hall (Jiggins Trustees)



Exercise and Play Equipment

- 2.36 Ixworth Playing Field is also managed by the Jiggins Charity and has been home to Village football teams for decades. It is used by the Primary School for routine sports lessons and is the only place within the Village boundary which is suitable for the exercising of dogs. It could, however, be re-landscaped more in the manner of a park. The field is currently home to three stages of play and exercise equipment ranging from toddlers to adults. The Jiggins Trust is considering the possibility of developing the area for a more general recreational use by Village residents.



The Playing Field



The Library (Suffolk Libraries)

- 2.37 Ixworth Library occupies two rooms within the Village Hall. Since 2012 it has been operated by Suffolk Libraries, an independent charity. It is open for 27 hours per week, including Saturdays. As well as books the Library loans CDs, DVDs and e-readers. Free internet access is provided and there are regular activities for all age groups from babies to adults. The Friends of Ixworth Library (FOIL) is a group which supports and promotes the Library. FOIL runs monthly film nights in the Village Hall.
- 2.38 A Youth Club has been established at Ixworth by the Jiggins Trust. The Club is operated by youth workers funded initially by grants and supported by local volunteers. A meeting point and a range of activities are offered as well as advice and support on issues relevant to young people living in a rural environment.



Allotments

- 2.39 There are 24 allotments in Ixworth Village spread across two locations. One site is owned by a local farmer and the other by the Jiggins Charity. Both are fully occupied.

Access to nature

- 2.40 Robin's Copse is a small nature reserve open to the public in Walsham Road in Ixworth. The land is owned by the Parish Council and the Reserve maintained by a group of volunteers.
- 2.41 The main natural areas enveloping the village have largely restricted access. One large natural resource, Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Micklesmere, lies outside the village. Of the riverbank only one side lies within the village and is largely inaccessible.

Places of worship

- 2.42 St Mary's Church in Ixworth Village is one of the eleven churches in eight neighbouring parishes that make up the Blackbourne Team. Services are held every Thursday and Sunday.
- 2.43 All Saints' Church in Ixworth Thorpe hamlet is also part of the Blackbourne Team but services are held only once every four weeks.



St Mary's Ixworth



Ixworth Methodist Church



All Saints' Church, Ixworth Thorpe

- 2.44 Ixworth Methodist Church sits in the High Street and was dedicated as a Wesleyan Chapel in 1888. Whilst it no longer holds regular Sunday services it does make its rooms available to local organisations for meetings.

Sports and leisure clubs

- 2.45 Ixworth Bowls Club has used the same green since it was founded in 1907. Whilst it is a members' club, it has an open membership policy and non-members can pay a fee to have a game. It has equipment suitable for a range of abilities including juniors and wheelchair users and also offers opportunities for people with visual impairments. The bowling green and clubhouse are on land owned by the Jiggins Trust.



Ixworth Bowls Club



Army Cadet Hut

- 2.46 The Army Cadet Force is a youth organisation which meets weekly at the Cadet Hut, Bardwell Road Junction. It provides training and learning activities for young people from Ixworth and surrounding villages aged between 12 and 18. Activities include life skills training, first aid, Duke of Edinburgh Award, BTEC CVQO as well as adventure activity, visits and an annual camp. Sponsored by the Ministry of Defence, the detachment is affiliated to the Grenadier Guards. There are currently around 30 young people involved.

What makes the parish a nice place to live?

- 2.47 Feedback from our public engagement events gave three main areas of high satisfaction with life in Ixworth:
- It is a friendly community which welcomes new residents.
 - There is a good range of local facilities and services; the Surgery, Library, Pubs and Convenience Store being particularly welcome.
 - It is a rural location with a Village 'feel' but close enough to major highways to allow travel to work in larger towns.

3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Challenges for Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the key issues that face the community of Ixworth Parish. In summary these are:

- To ensure that new housing meets the needs of those with a connection to Ixworth that are in housing need.
- To ensure that the infrastructure of Ixworth Village is protected, improved and expanded so that it can address the cumulative impacts of the growth in population that will arise through new development. In particular, this relates to the need for expanded community and retail facilities.
- The growing volume of traffic and parking in the Village centre, with its relatively narrow High Street remains a concern.
- The limited amount of access to recreational and green space provision in Ixworth Village and the poor access to leisure routes outside the Village.
- The event of the Covid-19 pandemic has seen at least two businesses close and there is a need, therefore, to encourage businesses and outlets.
- If Ixworth Village centre is to remain vibrant and continue to be a place where people come to shop and spend their leisure time, more businesses need to be encouraged.

Vision for Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe

'Ixworth parish: Something for everyone'

'In 2040, Ixworth parish is still a pleasant place to live. It has grown considerably in size, but its long-established character as a bustling Village with an attractive environment has been preserved. Ixworth remains a vibrant Village with its range of independent shops with good community facilities continuing to draw in local residents from the Village and the surrounding areas every day.

In particular, Ixworth has successfully addressed three key issues. First, new housing development has taken place on sites around Ixworth Village, reflecting the scale and character of the existing built environment – they have been integrated into the area and feel part of Ixworth. As a result of the new houses, neither younger nor older people now need to leave the Village to find affordable or suitable housing.

Second, improvements in traffic management and pedestrian safety have made for a more pleasant environment while the development of walkways (including a pedestrian footbridge over the A143) and cycle paths into and around the Village have encouraged people to leave their cars at home. This has reduced congestion and alleviated the pressure on the Village car park and the High Street, resulting in an improved Village centre as a place to stop and walk around. As a result, its shops

and businesses thrive by both day and evening. The improvement of provision for small businesses has increased job opportunities for local people.

The character of the older parts of the Village is now even more secure and has led to an increase in the number of visitors and tourists coming to the Village centre. Ixworth has become a destination, where people come to walk or cycle in the surrounding attractive countryside or to enjoy a drink or meal in the Village.

Third, additional and improved leisure facilities have been developed. Potential green spaces have been developed into recreational and informal leisure facilities to meet the needs of all sections of the population. New facilities for youth activities have been provided.

A strong community spirit continues to exist and new, along with established residents, have successfully integrated into the Village, giving everyone the opportunity to participate in and live a healthy, safe and satisfying life.'

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

- 3.2 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan as identified through engagement with the community are as follows:

Housing

1. Ensure the design of new housing in Ixworth Parish is of high quality and in keeping with the best examples of character and design in Ixworth.
2. Ensure new housing meets the needs of Ixworth Parish, particularly in respect of providing smaller dwellings for first-time buyers and older people while providing a suitable mix of sizes to enable movement within the Parish.
3. Ensure new development is designed so that it is in keeping with its rural location and does not feel overly dense.

Transport and Movement

4. Improve the functioning of the road network to ensure pedestrian safety and maximise the potential for use by cyclists.
5. Encourage the provision of and improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes into and around Ixworth Village to support a more sustainable and safer environment, reduce reliance on the car and offer healthier lifestyle options.
6. Ensure the provision of appropriate car and public bicycle parking within Ixworth Village.

Leisure and Recreation

7. Provide better opportunities for leisure for all in the community.

Environment

8. Improve the range and quality of open spaces and sporting facilities serving the local community.

9. Ensure new development does not increase flood risk and does not adversely affect drainage and flooding.
10. Ensure new development is energy efficient and enables wildlife to thrive.
11. Create greater access to the countryside through the creation of more pathways and green corridors. This public access should be sensitive to the needs of the natural environment.

Ixworth Village Centre

12. Provide for and enhance existing facilities and support initiatives to attract visitors and tourists to Ixworth Village.

4 SPATIAL STRATEGY (WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS TO BE FOCUSED AND WHAT IS EXPECTED OF IT)

- 4.1 Ixworth Village is classified in the former St Edmundsbury area Core Strategy 2010 as a Key Service Centre. This means that it is one of the main locations for growth to be focused across West Suffolk and serves a wider hinterland of rural hamlets, including Ixworth Thorpe.
- 4.2 The former St Edmundsbury area Rural Vision 2031 (adopted in 2014) plans for a minimum of 190 new dwellings over the plan period to 2031 on three site allocations. The Reeves Farm site allocation was granted planning permission for 16 dwellings and has been completed. The other two sites – land off Crown Lane and land to the west of the A143 and south of the A1088 – are allocated for 90 and 80 dwellings respectively. These sites are adjacent to one another and alongside the new dwellings, the allocation requires land to the north to be protected for a new primary school. At the current time, neither of these sites has been granted planning permission.
- 4.3 In the early part of the plan period, the former St Edmundsbury area Core Strategy and the Rural Vision 2031 will be replaced by a new Local Plan which will cover the period to 2040. The Regulation 19 consultation version of the West Suffolk Local Plan (which will be known as the West Suffolk Local Plan and will cover the local authority areas of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath) requires Ixworth to support growth on two site allocations of 290 dwellings. These sites are:
- Land at Bardwell Road – 145 dwellings and employment (retail) and village hall uses.
 - Land off Crown Lane and west of A143 – 145 dwellings plus land for provision of a primary school and early years setting.
- 4.4 The land off Crown Lane and west of the A143 is an amalgamation of the two sites allocated in the Rural Vision into a single site allocation.
- 4.5 In this regard, the Neighbourhood Plan is seeking to support and ensure that these sites provide the types of community infrastructure that will address the needs of the community, as identified through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. In particular, matters such as the lack of space to be able to have a wide range of community activities were raised. It is important that any opportunity to address this need is encouraged. It should also be noted that there was strong community support for the provision of an additional convenience store selling a wide range of goods. Whilst planning permission was granted for a convenience store at the northern end of the High Street in September 2017, the operator withdrew and there are no plans to build the store. Furthermore, the site has since been repurposed for other business activities within its existing permitted uses.
- 4.6 Policy IXW1 reflects this, with growth expected to be concentrated within the new settlement boundary of Ixworth Village, mainly on the sites proposed for allocation in the West Suffolk emerging Local Plan. Windfall development on small infill sites within the settlement boundary will continue to come forward. Development outside the settlement boundary will only be considered acceptable if it meets the requirements of policies relating to rural

development in the West Suffolk Joint Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD). This includes but is not limited to Policies DM27 (Housing in the Countryside), DM29 (Rural Housing Exception Sites in St Edmundsbury), DM31 (Farm Diversification) and DM32 (Business and Domestic Equine Related Activities in the Countryside). Rural exception sites are small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. They seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

- 4.7 It is also relevant to note that the Parish Council is seeking to gather the necessary evidence to determine whether it is possible and appropriate to establish a settlement boundary for Ixworth Thorpe hamlet in order to create more opportunities for housing development which can help to sustain the community of Ixworth Thorpe.

POLICY IXW1: IXWORTH SPATIAL STRATEGY

- A. New development will be focused within the settlement boundary of Ixworth Village and on allocations in any development plan document which supersedes the former St Edmundsbury area Rural Vision 2031. Development proposals within the settlement boundary or on future site allocations will be supported subject to compliance with the other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.**
- B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, residential development proposals should address the following key matters:**
- a. the evidence-based housing needs of the Ixworth Neighbourhood Area whilst providing either 20% or 30% Affordable Housing in conformity with policy CS5 of the adopted former St Edmundsbury area Core Strategy; and**
 - b. the delivery of contributions, as necessary and appropriate, towards key infrastructure which shall include but is not limited to primary healthcare, education, pedestrian movement, and community facilities, through direct provision and/or developer contributions (including Community Infrastructure Levy and/or Section 106).**
- C. New development should deliver high quality and well-designed buildings and, where relevant, within layouts which incorporate high quality natural landscaping which responds positively to the rural character of the parish.**
- D. Development proposals on sites that are outside the settlement boundary will not be supported unless they meet at least one of the following criteria:**
- a. They meet the requirements of policies relating to rural development in the West Suffolk (former St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath areas) Joint Development Management Policies Document or any successor document.**
 - b. They represent development required to support the rural economy.**
 - c. They represent development required to support the expansion of education provision.**

- d. They relate to the retention of existing businesses and the provision of new commercial business activities that are appropriate in the countryside.**
 - e. They relate to necessary utilities infrastructure and where no reasonable alternative location is available.**
 - f. They are for a rural exception site.**
- E. Where development uses best and most versatile agricultural land, the economic benefits of farming the remaining parts of any fields on an ongoing commercial basis must be clearly demonstrated.**

5 HOUSING

- 5.1 As noted in the Spatial Strategy section, the West Suffolk emerging Local Plan seeks to plan for a minimum of 290 new dwellings to be delivered over the plan period to 2040.
- 5.2 Part of the importance of West Suffolk Council allocating sites for development is to address housing needs, not only as part of the wider need of West Suffolk as a whole, but also the need arising from people with a local connection to Ixworth.

Housing mix

- 5.3 The Neighbourhood Plan has been informed by the Ixworth Housing Needs Survey 2019 (prepared by Community Action Suffolk for the Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan Group). The purpose of the study was to determine the level of need for housing across all tenure types in the parish. This need related to Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe residents and family members, even if those people did not currently live in the parish. It also sought to understand how affordable the current level of stock was to local people.
- 5.4 The key messages from the survey were:
- 73 households reported having residents who would require accommodation in the next 5 years. Most common were those in the 16-24 age bracket.
 - 38 households had close relatives who were not currently living with them but wished to live in the parish within the next 5 years.
 - 43 households reported having people living with them who wished to move within the Parish but were unable to do so. The main reasons related to the cost of housing.
 - 59% of households seeking accommodation within the parish were looking for something other than housing for sale at market value.
 - 20% of households seeking a new home were looking to downsize to a smaller property.
 - 26% of households that expressed a preference for a specific type of property were seeking a bungalow.
- 5.5 The West Suffolk Housing Register also provides further evidence of need specific to Ixworth Village and Ixworth Thorpe hamlet. In March 2024, the register contained 61 households with a local connection to Ixworth Village and a further 4 with a connection to Ixworth Thorpe hamlet. The large majority of these needs were for 1- and 2-bed properties.
- 5.6 The results of both sources suggest a clear housing need in Ixworth Parish. There is a need for a range of housing types, particularly smaller properties. A specific need is to enable older people currently living in bungalows to downsize, including to supported living accommodation, which in turn could enable older people in 4-bedroomed houses to downsize to the available stock of bungalows. This would free up some housing stock for growing families.
- 5.7 If bungalows are not provided, then the design of housing must ensure that it meets the needs of older people. In 2022, following a national consultation, the Government committed

to updating Building Regulations making it mandatory for new homes to meet standards in relation to accessible and adaptable dwellings (Part M4(2)). Whilst it did not make the same commitment for wheelchair accessible dwellings (Part M4(3)), the West Suffolk emerging Local Plan is proposing to require at least 13% of affordable homes to be delivered to this standard. It is particularly important, particularly on larger sites, that housing suitable for older people provides housing designed to meet these standards enabling them to maintain independence for longer, but also allowing for younger occupiers and families.

- 5.8 Affordability is a key factor especially among younger people seeking their first home. The Housing Needs Survey provides evidence that the creation of one or more Rural Exception Sites (whereby more affordable properties are held in perpetuity for households with a local connection) with a range of tenure types is justified for Ixworth Parish.
- 5.9 Policy CS5 of the former St Edmundsbury area Core Strategy 2010 requires new housing development to provide a proportion of affordable homes as part of any scheme. Reflecting the updated definition of major development in the NPPF, these requirements are :
- Sites between 0.17 and 0.5 hectares or between 5 and 9 dwellings should provide 20% affordable housing.
 - Sites of 0.5 hectares or more or 10+ dwellings should provide 30% affordable housing.
- 5.10 As at October 2023, West Suffolk Council had received 178 applications to be on the Self-Build Register. Of these, 12 stated a preference for a plot in Ixworth Village or Ixworth Thorpe hamlet. Subject to the other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, the provision of self-build or custom-build plots is supported.

POLICY IXW2: MEETING IXWORTH'S HOUSING NEEDS

- A. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should contribute towards Ixworth's role as a Key Service Centre. This means addressing both the needs of the wider Housing Market Area and the needs of Ixworth parish as a rural community.**
- B. Support will be given to dwellings that meet the requirements for accessible and adaptable dwellings under Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations and should demonstrate how the proposal contributes to increasing the choice and mix of housing available to the older population.**
- C. Proposals for self-build or custom build plots, or proposals that make a proportion of serviced dwelling plots available for sale to self-builders or custom builders, will be supported.**

Housing design and layout

- 5.11 Historic Ixworth Parish's stock of buildings, focused in particular close to Ixworth High Street, illustrate some of the features that give the area its character. These include a mix of styles, including some very attractive terraced housing, and use of materials such as flint, red and white brick and black woodwork. These are presented in a range of colours.



Traditional houses on the High Street



Traditional terraces

- 5.12 More modern estates have taken some limited cues from this earlier development and some – particularly the 1930s development – provided lots of public green space for play which also gives a feeling of openness. One good example of this is the large open green space between development along Street Farm Lane and Chalk Lane. Development since the 1980s has however failed to replicate this, with the community saying that development feels cramped and uniform with little public open space to encourage children and adults to congregate together. These developments have also been served by straight access roads, creating problems with speeding cars. Poorly designed pedestrian walkways have also discouraged people from walking.



**Good examples of modern developments with a mix of styles
(Horse and Hound)**



(Sanctuary Housing)

- 5.13 It is important that new development is designed and laid out in a way that respects the character of Ixworth and also encourages people to congregate, feel safe on the streets and encouraged to walk or cycle rather than drive for short journeys, particularly for development in Ixworth Village which is within walking distance of the shops and services on or close to the High Street.

POLICY IXW3: RETAINING IXWORTH PARISH'S CHARACTER THROUGH RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

Proposals for residential development should reflect the character of Ixworth Parish. Where practicable, this should be achieved by incorporating the following features into the overall design of development:

- a. Use of appropriate materials and colour palettes, particularly those that celebrate the vernacular of historic Ixworth.**
- b. Varying style of housing, including terraced housing, avoiding uniformity of layout and size.**
- c. Housing constructed around green open space which maximises opportunities to incorporate trees, shrubs and wild areas.**
- d. Accessible and attractive public open spaces, incorporating opportunities for 'natural play'.**
- e. Footways that allow for safe access for all persons, including disabled access.**
- f. Preserve and sensitively incorporate existing natural features such as trees and hedgerows within the site, with the aim of delivering a net environmental benefit for local people and wildlife and provide a measurable increase in biodiversity net gain (in line with the minimum requirements of the Environment Act 2021).**

Sustainable and environmentally-friendly design

- 5.14 The Climate Change Act 2008 committed the UK to an 80% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050. In June 2019, the UK Government made a commitment for the country to be net zero carbon by 2050. This was re-enforced by the Environment Act 2021 which, amongst other things, requires a net gain in biodiversity of at least 10% from many types of development. To achieve this will be a substantial feat that will require everyone to be engaged, from households and communities, to businesses and local and national government.
- 5.15 In terms of the UK's stock of housing, this means that new homes will have to be designed to minimise energy use and create very low net carbon emissions through their design. This will include minimising heating and heat loss through effective insulation, having low water demand, and being fitted with or directly connected to renewable energy systems. In this context, the orientation of buildings can be important in order to make best use of available sunlight.
- 5.16 With Britain no longer part of the European Union, the EU's Energy Performance of Buildings Directive - which required all new buildings to be nearly zero-energy by the end of 2020 - will not apply. The UK's equivalent - the Code for Sustainable Homes - was withdrawn by the Government in 2015 and this has been replaced by new national technical standards, which include optional Building Regulations standards regarding water and access as well as a new national space standard (this is in addition to the existing mandatory Building Regulations).

- 5.17 The Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to improve and promote sustainability in respect of minimising the emissions from built development in the parish by, for instance:
- integrating renewable energy systems into new development and retrofitting existing buildings;
 - reducing water consumption through the use of grey water systems;
 - developing community energy schemes.
- 5.18 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to encourage energy efficient and sustainable well-designed development.
- 5.19 At the local level, the design of individual buildings and of neighbourhood scale green and open spaces, including private gardens, will help to ensure that many of the species that are in Ixworth Parish can not only survive but thrive. This is crucially in line with the requirement in the Environment Act 2021 for development to achieve net biodiversity gain. This can be as simple as providing holes in fences for hedgehogs to move through or to place bird boxes at appropriate points on walls. Further guidance is provided by a NHBC Foundation report on biodiversity in new housing developments (source: <https://www.nhbc.co.uk/foundation/biodiversity-in-new-housing-developments>) .



Examples of communal growing spaces
(Fruitmarket.info) (WoodblocX.co.uk)

- 5.20 Alongside technical design measures, there are simpler measures that can be adopted to help households reduce their carbon footprint. One type of provision that is increasing elsewhere is participation in small growing spaces provided in communal areas outside residential developments. This can be as simple as a few raised planting beds and is rarely more than 50m² in all but the very largest developments. Not only do these enable more people to grow their own vegetables, but they have the advantage of being close to residents so they can participate in growing whilst engaging with fellow residents.

POLICY IXW4: INCORPORATING SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY FEATURES INTO BUILDING DESIGN

- A. Wherever practicable, development proposals should include features in their design that minimise the energy and climate impacts of new buildings and maximise the opportunities for biodiversity to thrive. In particular, development proposals should consider the following matters:**
- a. Siting and orientation of new buildings to optimise passive solar gain, using a colour palette which minimises overheating.**
 - b. The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials from sustainable sources.**
 - c. Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation, double glazing and low energy heating systems.**
 - d. Incorporating on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels and ground and air source heat pumps.**
 - e. Reducing consumption of potable water (with the aim of achieving a target of 100 litres per person per day) through the use of grey water systems and rainwater harvesting, and mitigation of surface water flood risk through the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).**
 - f. Providing the infrastructure for electric vehicle charging points that can be accessed by each dwelling or public building and meet the requirements of the Suffolk Guidance for Parking 2023 (or any successor document).**
- B. Proposals to develop renewable energy schemes will be supported, particularly proposals that will contribute towards supplying Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe's energy needs and/or are community-owned.**
- C. Development proposals that incorporate into their design features which encourage local wildlife to thrive will be strongly supported, particularly where these schemes are enacted in perpetuity under the Environment Act 2021 (30 years). In particular this may include:**
- a. Bird and bat boxes and hedgehog runs;**
 - b. Measures to support character species of fauna and flora;**
 - c. Planting schemes including native species of trees and shrubs and nectar-rich plants for bees and other pollinators;**
 - d. The connection of any features to wider ecological networks.**
 - e. Preservation of rural, riverside and other important habitats.**
- D. Wherever practicable, major new residential developments should provide defined growing spaces in communal areas that will contribute towards health and well-being appropriate to the scale of development and to enhance local food growing networks.**

¹ Major development is as defined in the NPPF - For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

6 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND IXWORTH HIGH STREET

Ixworth Village Hall

- 6.1 Since 1932, the residents of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe have had the benefit of a village hall that has been provided on its current site in land and buildings left in trust to the residents of the village. In 1990, this was renovated and extended in a programme financed by the Parish Council. Over the past decade, the facilities have dilapidated to an extent where they are no longer considered suitable to meet the needs of the community as new development emerges within the village. Therefore, there is a fundamental need to provide a new village hall/community centre facility in a location to be further determined subject to appropriate feasibility studies and resident consultations independent of the Neighbourhood Plan process.
- 6.2 A proposal to build a new library adjacent to the existing hall did not meet with universal approval locally during the consultations that were held in 2017. In addition, it proved to be an expensive option and could have resulted in the reduction of green space for additional car parking.
- 6.3 In looking for alternative sites, the purchase of land for expanded sporting facilities within Ixworth settlement boundary would be very expensive. It was however known that there were extensive facilities, football pitches, rugby pitches a cricket pitch and other facilities at the Ixworth free school now run by the Seckford Education Trust (SET). It was decided to make an approach to see if this area could be made available to the local community. This approach was successful and in addition a grant was obtained for £60,000 to build an all-weather multi use games area.
- 6.4 The Jiggins Memorial Hall and Playing Field Trust is a charitable incorporated organisation and owns and runs Ixworth Village Hall and playing field. It is seeking a site for an expanded village hall. The West Suffolk emerging Local Plan allocates a site at the Langridge for a range of uses including community uses. Work to support the Neighbourhood Plan has been focused on the design of the building to include a library facility. If the proposed site allocation in the emerging Local Plan is brought forward for development, then the required community uses could include a new village hall. The need for a village hall in a new location would have to be established at the time any development proposals were being assembled. If such evidence - which should appropriately reflect the views of the community - demonstrates that there is justification for the new hall, then it is envisaged that following completion it will be handed over to the community through the Trust. Equally, any alternative future plans for the village hall, whether on the existing site or a new site, should be subject to comprehensive community consultation. At this point there is a lack of clarity about the location for the new hall and the facilities to be accommodated. In effect it is an evolving project for which Policy IXW5 has been prepared. In this context the approach in the policy is general rather than site-specific. This will provide flexibility for all concerned to assemble an appropriate package of measures. It will also future proof the Plan by avoiding any specific reference to any site.

- 6.5 With respect to the existing Village Hall, if it were vacated then it is important that its re-use provides activities and uses which are of benefit to the community. This could include employment uses although it is considered that any vacant units on the High Street should be filled as a priority.
- 6.6 The existing car park is of a sufficient scale to provide parking in addition to that which would be required to support any occupiers and its location means it is an important asset serving the heart of Ixworth Village. It must therefore be retained.
- 6.7 Consideration of the existing playing field has been made but no definitive alternatives have been identified. Given its location and amenity, the community considers it an important space for leisure and informal recreation and therefore it is considered important to retain as an open space for the benefit of the community.
- 6.8 It is fundamental that any proposals for alternative uses in the existing Village Hall will only be permitted if satisfactory alternative provision has not only been justified but has been made available prior to the closure of the existing Village Hall.
- 6.9 It is recognised that the proposed alternative location for the village hall is not as central as the current location. The Village Hall plays an important role in contributing to the vitality and viability of the centre of Ixworth Village. In order to ensure that the new provision is effective, easy access from the High Street must be provided for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users. Alongside this, it will be important that the alternative uses in the existing Jiggins Memorial Hall play a role in supporting the vitality of the High Street, both through the services that occupying businesses provide and the additional footfall of workers and visitors.

POLICY IXW5: RE-PROVISION OF IXWORTH VILLAGE HALL

- A. The re-provision of Ixworth Village Hall within the settlement boundary or on any site adjacent to the settlement boundary that is allocated through another development plan document will be supported, subject to the following criteria:**
- a. Sufficient parking provision is made for both vehicles and bicycles on site.**
 - b. The quality, size and range of community spaces and ancillary facilities are of at least the same standard as the existing Village Hall.**
 - c. New provision has been completed and is available for use prior to the closure of the existing Village Hall.**
 - d. Safe access is provided to the High Street for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users.**
- B. Wherever practicable, the new Village Hall should incorporate a library at least equivalent to the provision in the existing village hall and should make provision for an enhanced library service to reflect the planned growth in the neighbourhood area.**
- C. Should a new Village Hall be provided in Ixworth Village, the re-use of the existing facility for activities which enhance the function of Ixworth Village Centre will be supported. Office, retail, and community uses (provided they are**

complementary to the facilities offered at the new Village Hall) and employment/meeting space will be particularly supported.

- D. In recognition of its value in supporting the vitality of the shops and services in Ixworth Village centre, the car park serving the existing Village Hall (along with the existing access onto the High Street) should be retained for public use unless it can clearly be demonstrated that an alternative use will not harm the vitality of the Village Centre.**

Ixworth Village Centre

- 6.10 The centre of Ixworth Village has always played a central role in community life. The primary focus has traditionally been built around its retail services which, in turn, has created a hub for community life, with the High Street acting as a natural venue for residents to meet.
- 6.11 Ixworth Village is designated in the former St Edmundsbury area Core Strategy 2010 as a Key Service Centre in recognition of the important role it has to play in serving the residents of the Village and those that live in the immediate surrounding area. This importance is enhanced by its relatively old and ageing population, with older people typically relying more heavily on local shops and services (an issue exacerbated by the limited public transport options).
- 6.12 As with many high streets however, Ixworth Village has experienced decline in the number and range of shops and services since the late-20th century. This brings fewer people into the centre of the village which makes it harder for existing businesses to thrive. However, there have been some recent successes. In 2019, the Courtyard Café opened adjacent to the Pykkerell pub and includes a small play area for toddlers.
- 6.13 Ixworth Village therefore needs to be creative in the way it provides shops and services that address the needs of the community. A more flexible approach is needed as to the types of appropriate uses that can occupy retail units, including temporary uses. In general terms temporary uses will not be considered appropriate if their operation requires a large number of vehicle parking spaces unless sufficient parking arrangements are incorporated within the proposal. The community has expressed an interest in developing a community hub – including post office services and a café – which should be assisted where possible.

POLICY IXW6: RETAINING AND ENHANCING THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF IXWORTH VILLAGE CENTRE

- A. To secure the ongoing vitality of Ixworth Village, proposals which protect, enhance and promote a diverse range of appropriate uses – including retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural and community - will be supported, subject to the other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.**

New retail premises

- B. The provision of new retail premises outside Ixworth Village Centre will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:**
- a. It meets the requirements of West Suffolk (former St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath areas) Joint Development Management Policies Document Policy DM35 (Proposals for Main Town Centre Uses) and Policy DM36 (Local Centres).**
 - b. Provision is made within the settlement boundary or site allocations in or any development plan document which supersedes the former St Edmundsbury area Rural Vision 2021 and in a location that is easily accessible to the existing community and the identified site allocation, particularly on foot and by bicycle.**

Temporary uses

- C. Insofar as planning permission is required, the use of Class E premises for temporary uses will be supported in Ixworth Village Centre. Such uses include 'pop up' shops and cultural, creative and leisure uses introduced on a temporary basis or for specific events. Any such temporary uses should demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential uses, particularly through noise and pollution.**

¹ A sequential approach must be applied to demonstrate that there are no suitable, viable and available sites in the Village Centre or edge-of-centre locations. Also, as directed by Policy DM35 of the West Suffolk (former Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury areas) Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015, proposals to provide more than 300m² of gross floorspace will require an impact assessment to demonstrate that it will not have a significant adverse impact in accordance with the NPPF (paragraph 94).

Leisure and sports facilities

- 6.14 Ixworth Village has a limited range of leisure and sports facilities. The growing population will create greater demand for facilities but also it should be recognised that there are certain requirements which could be better provided for. The delivery of new facilities or improvements to existing facilities will be secured through Section 106 contributions or Community Infrastructure Levy funding.
- 6.15 The April 2019 workshops on issues for the Neighbourhood Plan identified a desire for children's 'active' play facilities (e.g. an adventure playground) and youth facilities (e.g. skateboarding, BMX, etc).

POLICY IXW7: ENHANCING LEISURE AND SPORTS FACILITIES

In order to provide for the increased need for leisure provision to support the growing population of Ixworth Parish, development proposals that deliver the following shall be strongly supported:

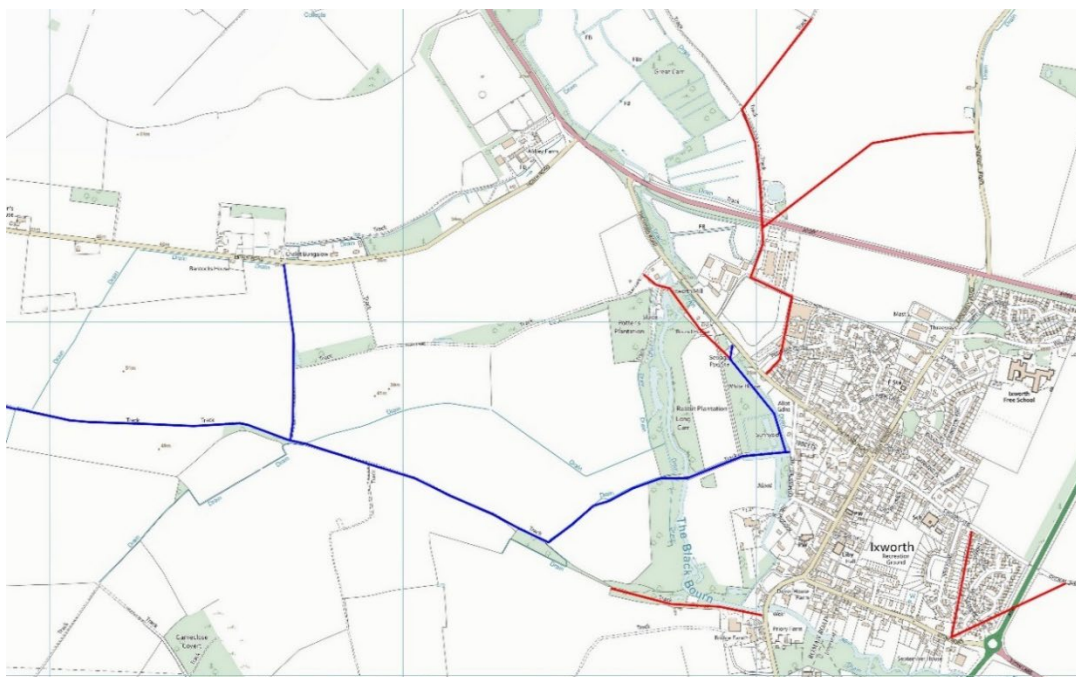
- a. Children's 'active' play facilities**
- b. Youth facilities**

7 MOVEMENT

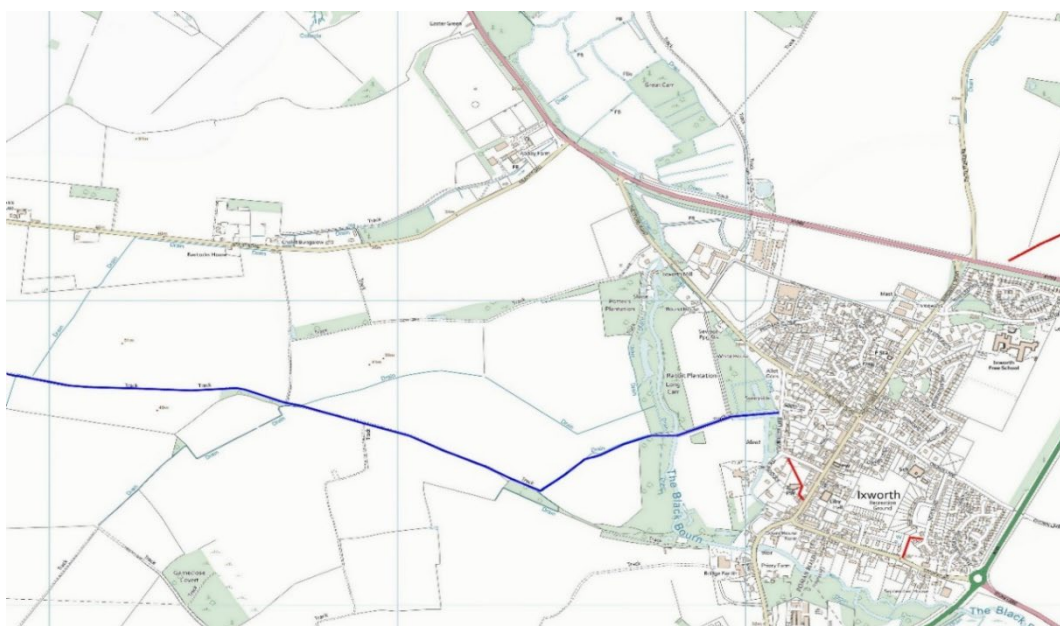
Key movement routes

- 7.1 Feedback from the community about the development of the Micklegrove estate, built in the early 1990s, was that the narrow, overgrown footpaths that lead into the centre of the Village are rarely used. This highlights a common problem, namely that if walking routes are not attractive and don't follow logical routes to key destinations, then people won't use them. This in turn encourages people to use their cars for short journeys within the Village.
- 7.2 In terms of trying to positively influence future patterns of movement into and around Ixworth Village, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to focus on making improvements for pedestrians and cyclists in order to encourage more walking. Linking the new housing allocations, as well as the existing parts of the Village, into a network of safe walking and cycling routes is vital to encourage more walking/cycling and less use of the car. Such improvements have a range of benefits including:
- Providing genuine alternatives to the private car as a means of accessing key shops and services, the two schools and other community facilities.
 - Reducing impact to air quality and mitigating any risk to human health due to man-made emissions such as nitrogen oxides and particulate matter.
 - Providing mental and physical health benefits through increased walking and cycling.
 - Reducing congestion at busy times by encouraging children to walk to and from school and people to walk to the shops rather than 'jumping in the car' for a short journey.
 - Providing a safer environment for the community of Ixworth, including vulnerable users.
- 7.3 Analysis of the existing routes and the location of both proposed and existing residential areas and the main services people use (shops, schools, community facilities) shows that the routes where good pedestrian facilities have the best chance of increasing walking are along the main roads in Ixworth Village:
- Along the High Street/Bardwell Road
 - Along Thetford Road/Crown Lane
 - Along Stow Road
 - Also, although not a main route, along Commister Lane
- 7.4 The improvement of these routes for pedestrians and also for cyclists will be particularly important as development comes forward. This includes ensuring that footways are wide enough to accommodate all users, including disabled users, and that crossings are provided as necessary. One such location where a pedestrian crossing is considered to be needed is along the High Street to safely link the existing community with any new development on the Langridge site (as proposed in the West Suffolk emerging Local Plan).

- 7.5 Ideally, dedicated provision for cyclists should also be made, although shared paths for pedestrians and cyclists should generally be avoided. Pathways should include position of regular benches to aid those with limited mobility. Benches that are conducive to conversation could help make the elderly population feel more included as part of the community and reduce isolation of vulnerable groups.
- 7.6 The parish of Ixworth is notably lacking in public rights of way, given its rural nature. It used to have a good number of routes but many of these were lost (see Maps 4a and 4b below).

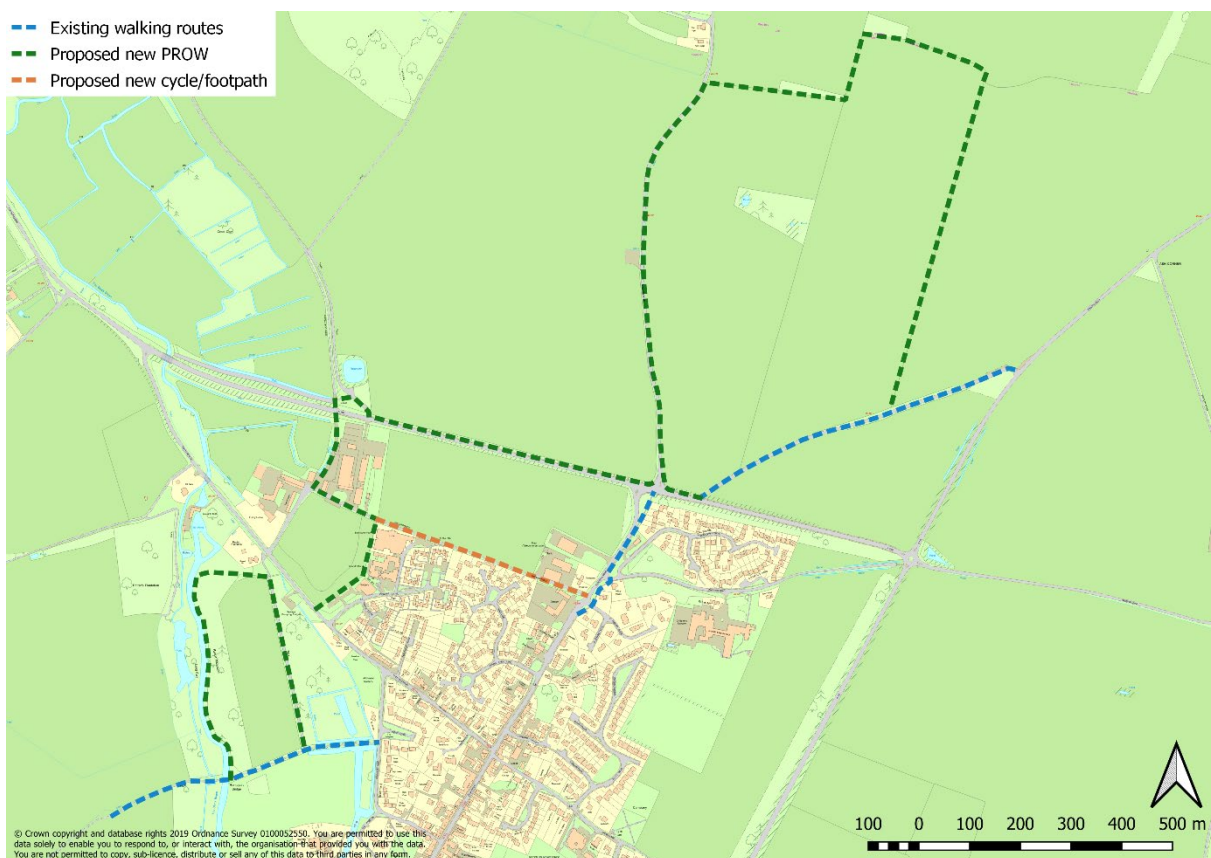


Map 4a: Footpaths (in red) and permissive footpaths/bridleways (in blue) - in 1951



Map 4b: Footpaths (in red) and public rights of way/bridleways (in blue) - today

- 7.7 Unsurprisingly as a result, the community has identified a strong desire for more rural walking routes, including circular routes. As part of any allocation for development of the Langridge (as proposed through the West Suffolk emerging Local Plan), the landowner has expressed a willingness to provide new circular walking routes across land under the same ownership. As shown on Map 5, this includes:
- to the north of the A1088
 - to the west of the village incorporating a walk along the river.
- 7.8 Any new paths should be provided as public rights of way unless it is clearly demonstrated that this is not possible.



Map 5: Proposed public rights of way (N.B. all identified routes, once adopted, would be public rights of way)

- 7.9 A partnership between the Parish Council and Suffolk County Council has been exploring various options for the delivery of a footbridge that would connect the two ends of Crown Lane. This bridge seeks to provide cycle access and considers access for wildlife.
- 7.10 Policy AP 30 of the submitted Local Plan advises that land to facilitate the delivery of a bridge across the A143 must be reserved (as part of the delivery of a wider package of green and blue infrastructure and other criteria). In addition, the inspectors of the submitted Local Plan have sought clarification on the justification for a bridge crossing the A143 (Matters, Issues and Question Q4.50). In all the circumstances this is a matter which the Parish Council will

review once the emerging Local Plan has been adopted, and the strategic position is clearer. It could form part of any wider review of a made neighbourhood plan.

- 7.11 The development of other routes to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists across the village are supported. The Parish Council will support positive engagement with landowners and Suffolk County Council (the highway authority) in order to bring such other routes forward.

POLICY IXW8: IMPROVING WALKING AND CYCLING THROUGHOUT IXWORTH PARISH

- A. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement and be in accordance with the Suffolk Design Streets Guide 2022 (or any successor document).**
- B. In particular, provision of pedestrian and cycling routes that are physically separated from vehicular traffic and from one another will be strongly supported. Such routes should also ensure that access by disabled users and users of mobility scooters is secured, which could include the provision of wider pavements, dropped kerbs and widened entrance ways.**
- C. To ensure that residents can access public transport facilities, schools, leisure and other important facilities, new developments (as appropriate to their scale, nature and location) should ensure there are safe, attractive and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to the following routes (shown on the Policies Map):**
- a. Along the High Street/Bardwell Road**
 - b. Along Thetford Road/Crown Lane**
 - c. Along Stow Road**
 - d. Along Commister Lane**
- D. Proposals to provide a pedestrian footbridge over the A143 bypass to the east of Ixworth Village will be strongly supported.**
- E. Development will be expected to avoid having a detrimental impact on the routes and access points identified in Parts C and D. Where necessary development will be expected to provide a strategy to mitigate the impact of additional traffic movements on pedestrian and cyclist safety and movement.**

Public Rights of Way

- F. Development proposals should protect and, as appropriate to their scale, nature, and location, enhance the existing Public Rights of Way network where this would improve walking routes from the development site. Wherever practicable these routes should connect to the Public Rights of Way network.**
- G. Development proposals should also seek opportunities to link to green spaces and, where appropriate, contribute towards their improvement.**

Vehicular parking

- 7.12 In a rural location such as Ixworth Parish where public transport is limited, car ownership is high. It is therefore important that adequate parking provision is made for all types of new development. In particular, residential development – a high generator of parking need – must be well designed in order to maximise the safety of pedestrians. This in turn will help to encourage more pedestrian movement for short trips within and around Ixworth Village.
- 7.13 The requirements for the provision of parking are provided by the Suffolk County Council Parking Guidance 2023. Development proposals that generate an increased need for parking will be expected to have regard to this guidance.

POLICY IXW9: VEHICULAR PARKING

- A. Development proposals should provide car parking spaces Parking to the standards set out in the Suffolk County Council Guidance for Parking 2023 (or any successor document).**
- B. Residential and public cycling parking provisions should be provided in secure and accessible locations and in accordance with the adopted parking guidance.**

8 ENVIRONMENT

Local Green Spaces

- 8.1 Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to them. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 106 of the NPPF says that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
 - local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 8.2 The following eight areas are considered to fulfil all of the criteria of the NPPF:

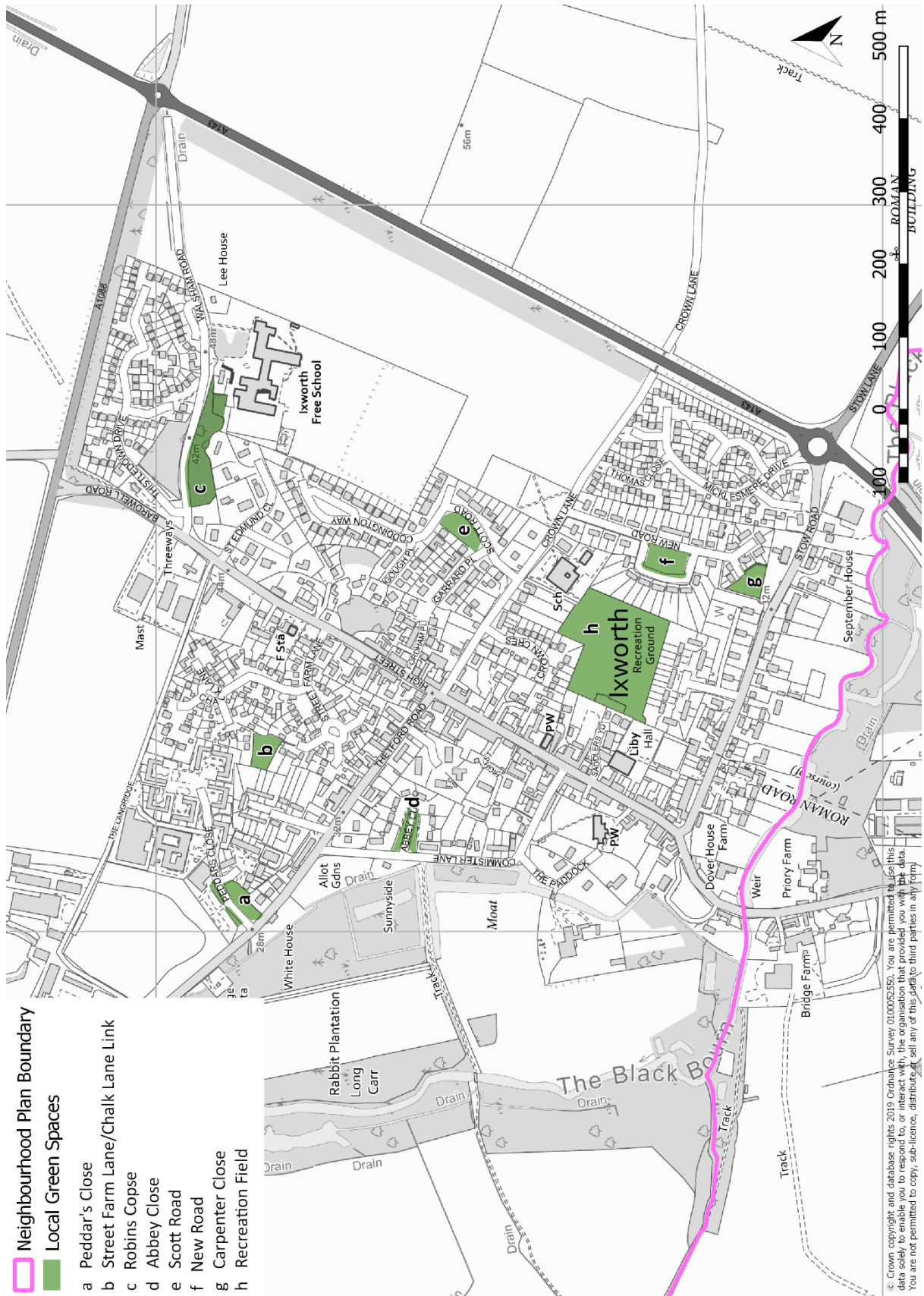
POLICY IXW10: PROTECTING LOCAL GREEN SPACES

A. The following areas shown on the Proposals Map are designated as a Local Green Spaces:

- a. Peddar's Close
- b. Street Farm Lane/Chalk Lane Link
- c. Robins Copse
- d. Abbey Close
- e. Scott Road
- f. New Road
- g. Carpenter Close
- h. Recreation Field

B. Development proposals within the defined Local Green Spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.

- 8.3 Map 6 shows each of the Local Green Spaces. Detailed maps of each space are shown in Appendix A. Details of how each area fulfils the Local Green Space criteria are included in the supporting evidence base.



Map 6: Location of Local Green Spaces

Sustainable Drainage Systems

- 8.4 Ixworth Parish was notorious for its drainage problems throughout the 19th century, mainly due to its sloping locations. The main problem area was along the line of Ixworth High Street down towards the river, with a secondary issue of surface water run-off down Thetford Road from the High Street. A sewage system was finally installed in 1951 to solve the problems.
- 8.5 More recently, problems have been experienced at the low point in the system in Commister Lane/The Paddock during heavy rainfall. In 2018, Anglian Water installed a storm tank in Commister Lane which has the capacity to accept the run-off from a 3.3% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) storm event, prevent it from overwhelming the sewers and then gradually pump the water away. Problems still persist however on Thetford Road between the A1088 and the bridge, the High Street/Stow Road junction and near to the coach park at the A143/A1088 junction.
- 8.6 Whilst this significant infrastructure investment addresses a known flooding issue, it is important that the Neighbourhood Plan ensures that new development provides effective sustainable drainage solutions (SuDS) to mitigate surface water risk, ensure surface water quality and benefit biodiversity and amenity value, also allowing residents to be closer to nature and green infrastructure. SuDS drainage features are required on new development as per the NPPF.



**Examples of multi-functional SuDS provision
(Pinterest)**



(Open House London)

- 8.7 With the threat of a warming climate, SuDS provide opportunities to mitigate the growing threat of water stress through effective water capture and management. For example, when rainwater or greywater is captured, it can be used to keep greenery adequately watered and to generally cool the ambient temperature of the built development.
- 8.8 Development proposals should be supported by a drainage scheme maintenance plan, which demonstrates a schedule of activities, access points, outfalls and any biodiversity considerations, as well as the body responsible for each aspect of the plan. SuDS assets will require recording on the Suffolk County Council Flood Risk Asset Registry. This information provided should be proportionate to the stage of the application. Where possible, water entering SuDS should be returned to the aquifer.

POLICY IXW11: MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

- A. Where appropriate, development should mitigate the risk of flooding from all sources and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere through use of multi-functional Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which can be available for use as informal open space if well designed. SuDS should be well integrated and an attractive part of a development and the use of a wide range of creative solutions are encouraged such as provision of SuDS as part of green spaces, green roofs, permeable surfaces and rain gardens.**
- B. Wherever practicable, development proposed SuDS should be designed so they can enhance wildlife and biodiversity.**

9 NON-POLICY ACTIONS

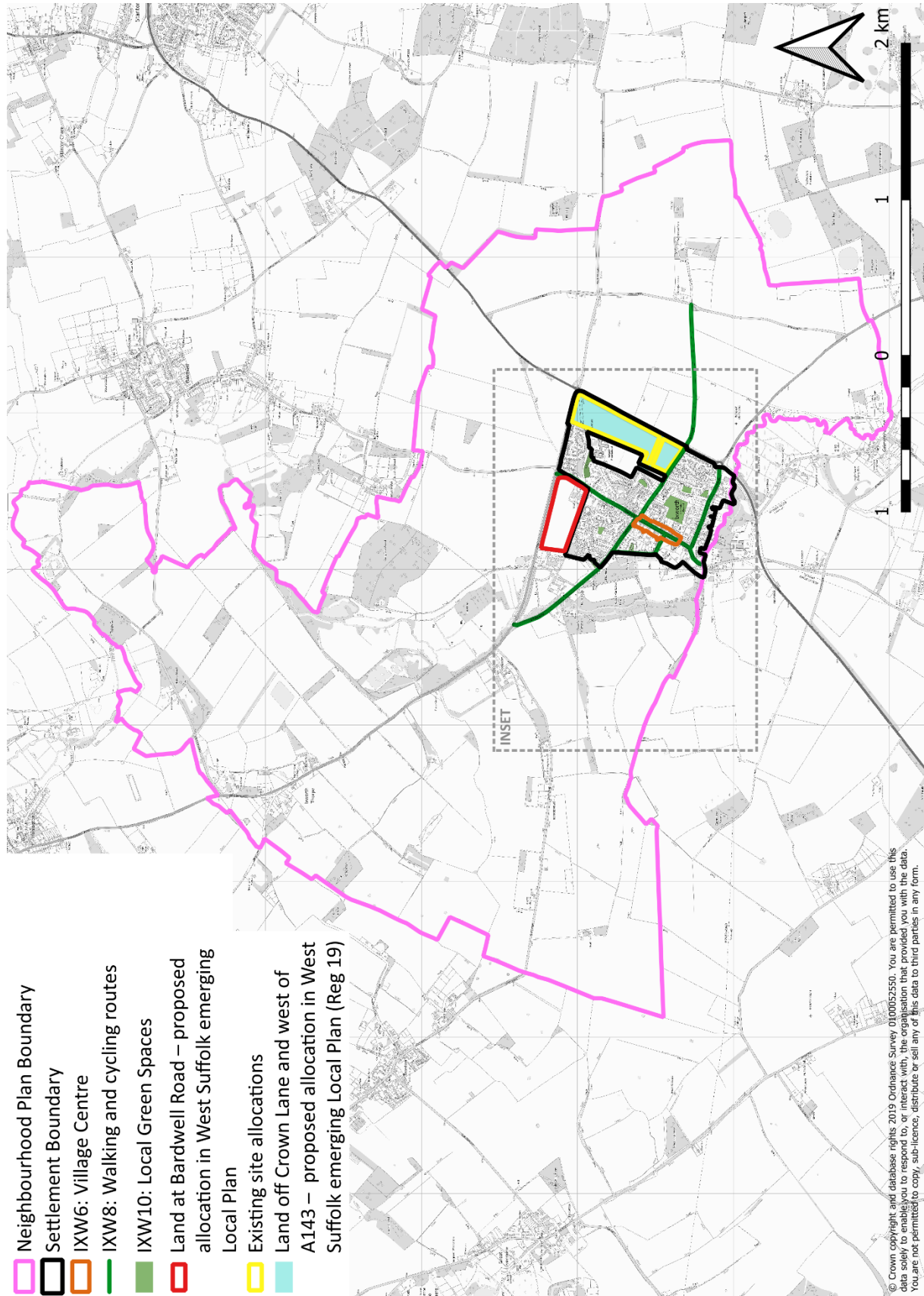
- 9.1 Table 10.1 below identifies a series of actions that have arisen through the community engagement in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. These were considered by the community to be important matters but do not necessarily require planning permission. As such, they are not the subject of planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. These non-policy actions will be reviewed by Ixworth Parish Council in line with the rest of the Neighbourhood Plan as part of the West Suffolk Local Plan Review, to take account of changing circumstances and community aspirations.

Table 10.1: Non-land use issues to be addressed

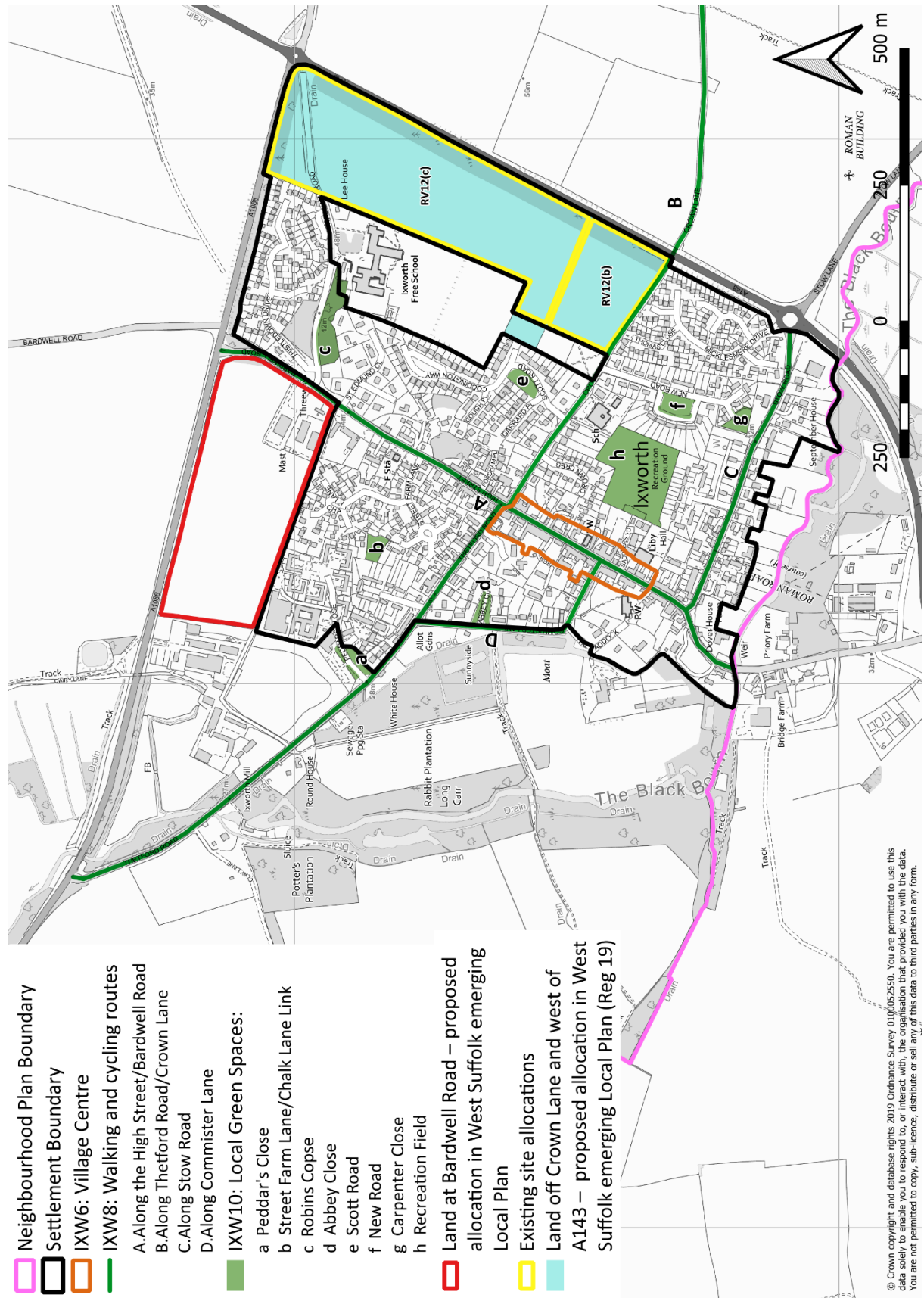
Issue	Possible actions
Retain, strengthen and improve retail activity on Ixworth High Street.	<p>Set up Ixworth Business Association to co-ordinate actions which support and develop the High Street economy.</p> <p>Create promotional material for the parish – to attract visitors, capitalising on events, markets and festivals, and also to attract niche businesses.</p> <p>Support flexible use of shop units and encourage temporary uses (for instance via pop-up shops), including open-air markets.</p>
Encourage events and activities which attract people to Ixworth High Street	<p>Provide for pop-up stalls and activities, potentially to coincide with other events, such as the Mayday Weekend Cycle Races.</p>
Increase youth activity	<p>Recruit one or more youth advocates to the Parish Council to represent the interests of young people at the heart of community business.</p> <p>Encourage involvement of children and young people in designing play and recreation areas.</p>
Create more opportunities for community interaction	<p>Consider starting new community activities – e.g. ‘Men and Sheds’, local resident meet-ups etc.</p> <p>Work with local residents and heritage groups to collect a historical archive for the parish.</p> <p>Identify opportunities for SET Academy School students and Primary School to collaborate.</p>
Traffic management	<p>Explore potential to develop a ‘20’s Plenty’ scheme within Ixworth Village, including modern traffic calming such as planters.</p>
Access to ‘soft edges’ of Ixworth	<p>Negotiate with landowners to provide public access to green spaces on the edge of Ixworth Village, in particular the riverside and the ‘moats’ north of Ixworth Abbey.</p>
Raising awareness	<p>Work with West Suffolk College to strengthen links to promote the Micklesmere for their environmental courses.</p>

Issue	Possible actions
Recycling	<p>Identify incentives to support eco-friendly actions and local projects where recycled items can be used for common good.</p> <p>Encourage Parish Council and local businesses to recycle more of their waste.</p>
Supporting ecology	<p>Create more opportunities for school students and young people to help with the nature reserve.</p>
Healthy Ixworth	<p>Investigate opportunities for working with Ixworth Surgery and others to promote a healthier Ixworth.</p>
Engagement	<p>Work with housing developers and West Suffolk Council to have input, at the earliest stage, into the development of the new housing in Ixworth.</p>

10 POLICIES MAP

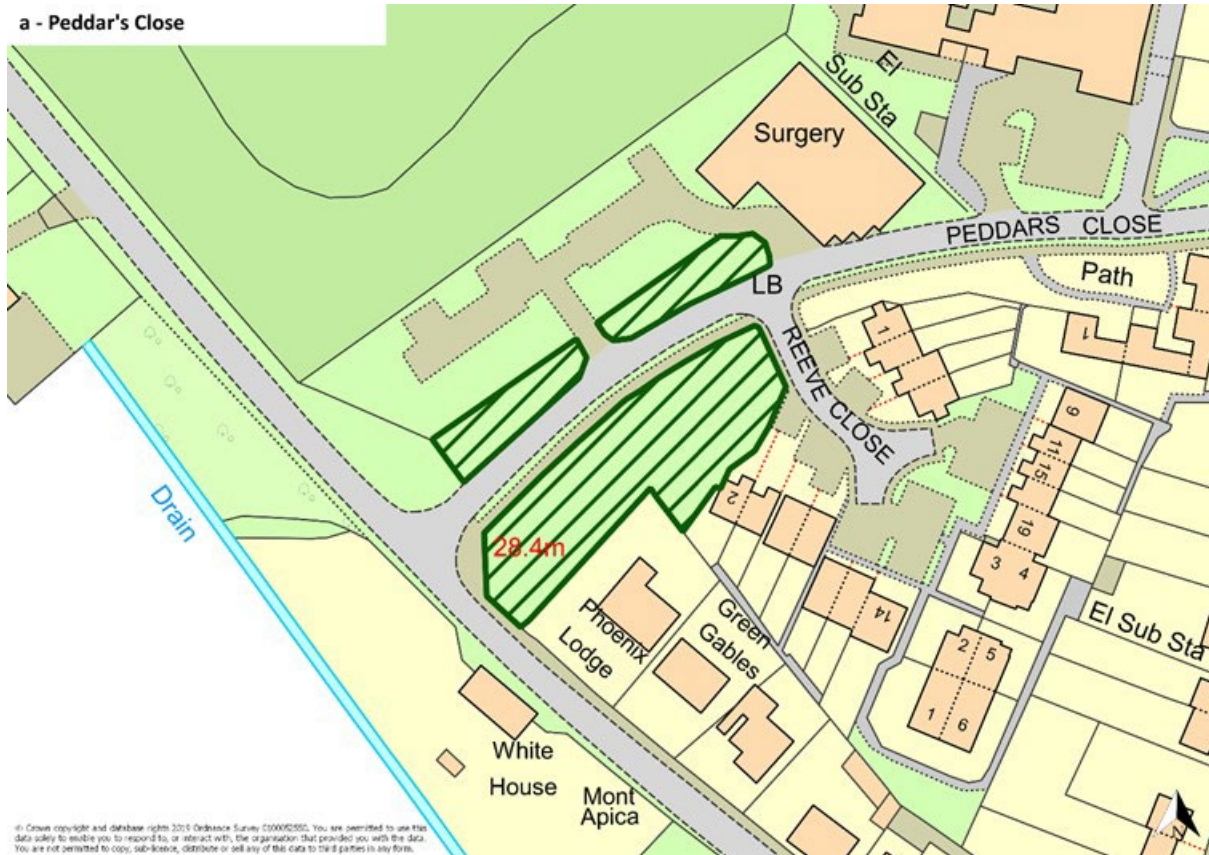


INSET MAP



APPENDIX A LOCAL GREEN SPACES

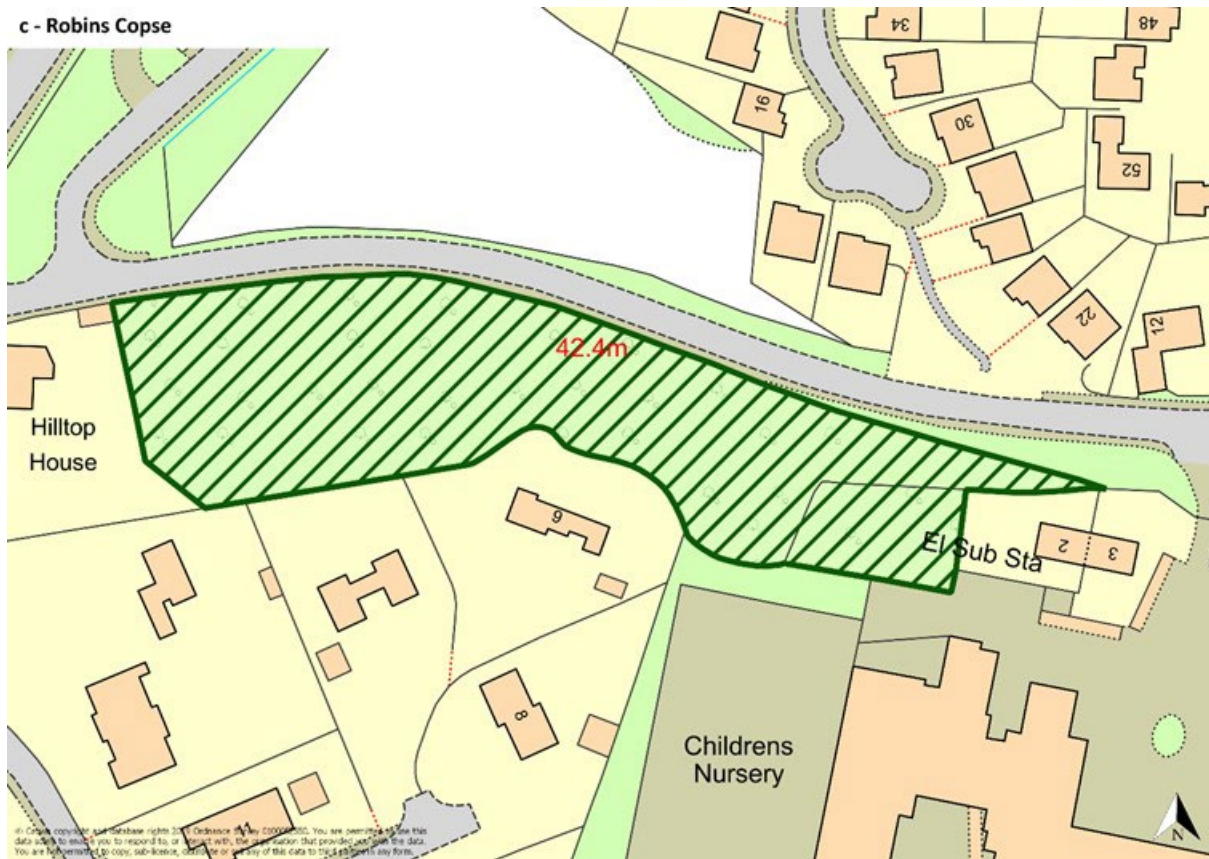
a - Peddar's Close



b - Street Farm Lane Chalk Lane Link



c - Robins Copse







f - New Road





h - Recreation Field

